

A

Bartholmew Fairing for
Parentes, to bestow vpon their
sonnes and daughters, and for one
friend to giue vnto another: Shevving that
children are not to marie, without the con-
sent of their parentes, in whose pover
and choise it lieth to provide
wiues and husbandes for
their sonnes and
daughters.

*Wherin is sufficiently prooued, what
in this point is the office of the father
and in like manner declared the
part and duty of all o-
bedient chil-
dren.*

By Iohn Stockwood, Minister
and preacher of Tunbridge.

Jerem. 29. 6.

Take you wiues, and beget sonnes and daughters, and
take wiues for your sons, and giue your daughters
to husbandes, that they may beare sons & daugh-
ters, that you may be increased there, and not dimi-
nished.

L O N D O N.

Printed by Iohn Wolfe, for Iohn Har-
rison the younger, dwelling in Paper Noster-
rowe, at the signe of the golden
Anchor. 1589.

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To the right worshipfull, M.

Thomas Skeuington of Skeuington, Esquire,
at this present high Sheriffe of Leicester-shire
and one of her Maiesties Iustices of the peace
there: Iohn Stockewood Minister and preacher
of the worde of God at Tunbridge in
Kent, wisheth all felicitie of mind and
bodie, through Iesus Christ our
most merciful redeemer.



Hildren (right worshipfull) as we al wel know,
when their parentes or
any of those, with whō
they haue any familiar-
rity, goe vnto any faire,
vse commonly at their
taking their iourney to
say vnto them: *I pray you bring me home a
Fayring.* And not only children are for the
most part thus affected, but we see it also to
be the fashon of others of greater growth, &
further yeares, when as at faires they meete
with their friendes and acquaintance, to bee
begging and asking of them: *What will you
giue me for a fairing?* And the curtesie that is
this way bestowed, be it in a maner neuer so
small and simple, is notwithstanding wel ac-
cepted and kindly taken from the hand of the
giuer, as being a signe and token of his good
will and louing affection towards the party,
on whom he doth bestowe the same. This

The Epistle

custome simply in it selfe not to be condemned (although through abuse the best thinges may be peruerted) I haue at this present framed my self vnto, & as I could for the shortnes of the time, prepared this treatise, discoursing vpon the office of parentes in prouiding their children of honest mariages in due season, & shewing at large the dutie and obedience of their sonnes and daughters in this behalfe.

How necessarie for al sortes of people this my trauaile (such as it is) may be, it is not my meaning here in many wordes to dilate. The generall want of performance of dutie in this respect, on the one side by the parentes, and on the other by their children, hath bin the foster-nurse, & brood-mother of many great inconueniences, wherwith both the Church & common wealth, yea and many priuate families, are not a litle pestered, against the which if by this my labour, God of his mercie granting vnto it this blessing, I may be thought to haue set downe some remedie, it shal nothing grieue me to haue taken the same, being glad if any way by my simple seruice, I can bring any profite vnto the Church of God, the which howe much or how litle soeuer it bee, who so shall thereby receiue any benefit next vnto God he shall be beholding vnto your worship for the same, who haue bene the chiefe occasion of the publishing hereof.

For owing a dutie vnto you for your curtesie shewed, at the request of the right honorable

Dedicatorie.

norable, the Earle of Huntington, my verie singular good Lord and maister, I haue euer since bene deuising, how I might giue out some testimonie of my gratefull remembrance of this worshipful kindnes, and hauing none other meanes of greater valour, I haue presumed to giue trial therof by these paper thanks whereby al posteritie may witnesse, that I acknowledge my selfe to remaine a debtor vnto you for vnderfuerd curtesie extended towards me, the which, in asmuch as I am able no other waies to requite, I do in al humilitie request your worship to account and reckon me in the number of those, who being manie pleased by you, though hindmost peraduerture in worldlie abilitie, will be found notwithstanding as forward as the formost in all dutifull and thankfull good will, as one that hateth in the worlde nothing more than the most vglie and loathsome monster of ingratitude and vnthankfulnes. The time falling out so fitlie with the finishing of this worke, and publishing the same, I haue geuen vnto it the name of a *Bartholmew Fayring*, the rather by the noueltie of the title to drawe on the multitude of people that nowe out of all places of our country repaire vnto the citie, to the better beholding and consideration of the matter cōtained in the treatise: the which, as it is general, and concerneth all that either are, or may be parents, or children: so the doctrine marked heedfullie, and practised accordingly

The reason of
the Title.

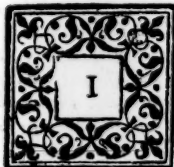
The Epistle

cerdingly, cānot choose but fal out auailable vnto manie, who learning here , that which for the most part they were ignorant of , and thought strange before , will henceforth prooue to be more carefull fathers in prouiding christian mariages for their sonnes and daughters, and their children more dutifull & obedient in being ruled by them, & following of their choice , and in diligent warefulness, that they intangle and bewrap not themselves in wedlocke-bands without the consent and liking of their parents. Accept therefore I beseech you (right worshipfull) this simple present as an vnfeined token of my good will , with that fauourable curtesie, wherewith you are woont to imbrace others much bounden welwillers, the which, if you shall vouchsafe me, I haue obtained my desire praying the almighty for euer to protect you. Tunbridge, this 20 August, 1589.

Your W. much bounden in al
dutifull and most thankful
good will :

John Stockwood.

To all godlie Parentes, with
 their like vertuous children, and all other the
 Christian Readers, into whose handes this
 book may come, increase of true know-
 ledge & sincere practise of the
 same through Iesus Christ.



I t is not for nothing (right
 courteous and christian rea-
 ders) that we haue bene by
 our Sauiour Christ so ma-
 ny yeares sithens before-
 hand warned of the state
 and condition of this wo-
 full and doting world set
 on fire vpon mischiese & iniquitie, that the nee-
 rer it groweth and hasteneth vnto his end, the
 worse & worse it shal daily wax, insomuch that
 the Lord when he shal come to iudgement, shall Luk. 18. 8.
 hardlie finde faith vpon the earth. For such are
 the miseries of our times, that notwithstanding
 the plentifull preaching of the Gospell in most
 places, sin still raigneth in aboundance, and ini-
 quitie getteth more and more the vpper-hand,
 insomuch that those enormities and outrages,
 the which are condemned by the law of Nature,
 the word of God, the practise of the godlie in all
 ages, the testimony of the Heathen, and generall
 consent of all commendable learning, are not-
 withstanding of many not onely laughed and ie-
 sted at, but also sought to be countenanced, and
 defended

To the Reader.

defended (an euident token of the great corruption of our age) of such as otherwise want not their due praise for ciuill conuersation and behaviour. Among these is not the last nor least, the too vsuall bad custome of childrens marrieng, without the consent and allowance of their parentes, a sinne that nature it selfe abhorreth, and all writers of the better note, in all ages vtterlie disallowed, and yet of the greater number holden and taken for no fault at all, whose error in iudgment, arising for the most part of ignorance, I haue faithfully laboured by all sufficient kind of proofes in this writing to disprooue, the which not vnfitly, nor nigh my purpose and meaning at the leastwise) offensively, I haue termed a Bartholmew fairing, respecting the time, and the great resort that yearly come vnto the fair, who, now if they list may haue a nouell of small prices but yet of much value, to bestow vpon themselves their children & their friends, worthy I hope of their reading and much more of their practise, as their seuerall places & callings shall require. And I haue bene the more willing to enter into this course, and vndertaken this matter, that I might discharge some part of a promise vnto diuerse my godly friends of Kent and Suffex, which are towards the right honourable and vertuous Earle of Huntington, vnto whom I also my selfe am bound in all dutifulnes in the Lord, who by their due right may iustly claime the same at my hand of whom they haue all so well deserued, and vnto whom I am sure this treatise will come welcome.

How.

To the Reader.

Howsoever it fall out of some to be misliked: for concerning them I am fully perswaded, as Ioshua speaketh of himselfe and his. That they and their houses will serue the Lord. And I make no doubt of al other zealous Christians, but that this labour shall be well thought off. It is growen I confesse, albeit vnto no great, yet much bigger bulke, then when I began it, I supposed it should: the Lord hauing giuen a further blessing vnto it then I looked for, whereby I am comforted, that he will of like mercie direct it vnto the good and benefis of his Church. Eloquence and rethoricall flourishings, with filed wordes and braue phrases, are not here to be expected and looked for, as beeing such flowers, the which neuer grewe in my barren, plaine, and homely country garden, yet may the hearbs that here are to be found, though not carrieng any outward gay and gallant shew, yeeld an wholsome and pleasant smell in the nostrils of all godly parents, worn not in the hands, but in the hearts and minds of all louing and dutifull children, the which should henceforth of conscience and knowledge put into diligent vse and practise this most necessarie and waightie point of dutie, the which hitherto of ignorance, and lacke of teaching, hath of the greater number bene neglected, foreflowed, and ouerpasse.

Vnfeignedlie wishing your knowledge and
practise of all necessarie duties.

John Stockwood.

1. *Chrysomelidae* (Coleoptera): 10 species

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That Mariages are not *to be made without the consent of* Parentes.



Mong many other
vices, wherewith
the worlde at this
day is full fraugh-
ted, insomuch that
the verie elements
themselues, toge-
ther with the rest of
the creatures (as S.
Paule in his 8 Cap.

Rom. 8. 20.

21. 22. 23.

vnto the Romans doth teach vs) doe groane
vnder the burthen of them, looking for a
change, from the vanitie whereunto they are
made subiect through the sinne of man, that
they may be restored vnto the glorious li-
bertie of the sonnes of God, this one is nei-
ther the least nor the last, whereby youth for
the most part is growen vnto such a passe,
that forgetting al childlike affection and du-
tifull obedience vnto father and mother in
the highest point of subiection, the which
they owe vnto them in this life, and whervp-
on dependeth their making or marring (as
they say) together with the continuall ioy or
sorrow of their parentes they whollie follow
their

Gen. 6. 1.

If obedience
due vnto pa-
rents in the
smallest mat-
ters, much
more in the
greater.

follow their own will and let out the raines vnto their owne vnbrideled & vnsetled lusts, making matches according to their own ficke fantasies, and choosng vnto themselues yokefellowes after the outward deceiuable direction of the eie, nothing regarding the sounde aduice of a minde guided with the knowledge & feare of God, the which counselleth to respect the inwarde graces and ornamentes of the soule, & not to be enamoured with the outward garnishing, beauty, brauerie and decking of the bodie. And hereof it commeth to passe, that men in their marriages following the maners of the sons of the first forlorne world, seeing the daughters of men to be beautifull & pleasing vnto the eie, take vnto themselues of all that they like, not waiting nor staieng for the choise of their parents, by whose authoritie, if they ought to be directed in the matters of smaller waight and lesse importance, as now is so shamelesse and void of grace, that he dare to denie, how much more are they then to be ruled by their graue aduice in this which chiefly concerneth Gods glorie, their owne welfare, the chearing and reioicing of them that haue begotten them.

But like as in the first age of the world, this sin is in the place of Genesis before recited, reckoned vp by the holie Ghost for one of the principall causes that mooued God to set wide open the windowes of heauen, and to
poure

poure downe raine in such fearfull abundance, as that in the raging force & swelling streame of the same, man with all other creatures miserably perished, those onely excepted, the which were preserved in the Arke : so questiões we do owe most of the plagues, wherewith now a daies God punisheth this present age, and in the end will in fearfull maner consume the same vnto this great and maine sin of children their matching in marriage without the counsaile and aduice, nay spite of the teeth of their godly parentes. For marriage being the meanes the which God himselfe hath ordained and sanctified for the propagation and increafe of mankind, that being taken in hand in his feare, a godly seed being multiplied & growen vp here on earth the same may be blessed to the constitution & making of a Church, the which may serue him in holines and righteousness : when the same is taken in hand with the breach of his commandement, so far off is it, that any blessing is to be hoped for, that contrariwise his hot indignation and heauie curse hangeth ouer that house & familie, wher the parties which are the principall pillers and vpholders of the same, are linked and tied together in such a bād of wedlock, whose links & inclosings are not fastened and coupled together with the necessarie and lawfull assent and liking of the parentes, whose authoritie & consent ought to beare the chiefest sway, and strike likewise the

Marriage taken in hand with the breach of Gods commandement, can not prosper.

the greatest stroke in this most holy and heauenlie action. And like as mariage is begon & enterprised in the feare of God according to his word, there God is well pleased, there the parties so matched liue together in a ioyfull agreement and liking the one of the other, there God is honoured and serued in synceritie and truth, there the children, when God giueth them, with the rest of the familie are instructed and brought vp in the knowledge of religion, and grounds of faith: so on the other side, the regard of that which God especially cōmandeth, being shut out of our mariages, there must needs ensue his dislike, and displeasure, there is iar and discord, there Gods honour is neglected, there household-discipline and chritian-instruction of such as belong vnto our chardge, goeth vtterly to wracke, and is nothing at all regarded. And no marueil: for, if where God bleffeth, all thinges goe well and doe prosper, then consequentlie where he curseth, there nothing thriueth, hath good successe, or goeth happily forward.

Now if anie shall suppose that these speaches are but wordes of course, & carrie a gallant shew, without any substance or prooffe of matter, pointing rather vnto such an order as we would haue, or wish to be obserued in the matches of our children, then shewing by good euidence that so it ought indeed and of right to be, it is now time that we drawe
some-

somewhat neerer vnto the question, the which vpon waightie consideration we haue taken in hand, & by Gods assistance mean to prooue: which is, that children may not marry without the consent & agreement of their parentes. And this I hope shall in such sort be performed, as that it shall plainlie appeare, that not only the consent of father & mother is chieflie requisite in the case of mariage, but also in the former ages and more ancient times of this world, alwaies declining from better to worse, that the choise it selfe of wiues for the sonnes, and husbandes for the daughters, rested wholly in the power & authoritie of the parentes, insomuch that not onely the better sort of the children of the godlie referred the whole care of their bestowing this way vnto the prouident election of their fathers and mothers, but the verie heathen themselues that were not altogether past grace, and had cleane shaken of the yoke of dutiful obediēce, would not so much as once vouchsafe to heare of the motion of any match for themselues in the state of wedlock, except the choise of their fathers & mothers had gon before.

First then I wil lay this down for the foundation, whereupon the rest of the building shall be framed, the which is granted and agreed vpon among all the learned: namelie, that howsoeuer the minde of man since and through the fall of our first parentes, is blinded

The principal drift and purpose of this Treatise.

God hath
planted cer-
taine generall
principles, &
groundes of
true th in the
hearts of all
men.

ded and darkened, yet God hath left some
small & general sparkles of light in the same,
the which the verie heathen haue acknow-
ledged, and receiued for vndoubted trueths,
and there is none so blunt and shameles, that
he can gaine say them, as for example: *That
we ought not to hurt or wrong any man: That
we must giue to euery one that which is his.* And
(which is the head and chiefe of all, concer-
ning our outward behauiour, and such dea-
linges as vsuallie doe fall out betweene man
and man) *Doe not that vnto another, the which
thou wouldest not haue to be done vnto thy selfe.*
with many other such like, the which we o-
therwise tearme The law of nature, or of na-
tions, be cause they are naturallie engrauen
and written in the heartes of all men, and ap-
prooued and receiued with the generall con-
sent of all nations, yea and that so far forth,
that those which do violate and breake them
were worthy of death, as the holie Apostle
himselie somewhere in wordes doeth testifie
and witnesse: if therfore it be a principle that
no man doubteth of, *That we should doe as
we would be done vnto,* and that we ought not
to doe vnto others that thing, the like wher-
of we would be greeued and offended, they
should doe vnto vs: I appeale to the consci-
ence of all gracelesse sonnes and daughters,
as now a daies (the more is the pitie) in too
great multitudes betroth themselues in ma-
riage without the priuitie, nay against the
will

Rom. 1. 13.

The first rea-
son from the
law of nature

will of their fathers and mother, whether that they would take it in good part at the hands of their children, if they should in like maner provide themselves of wiues and husbands, their good will and consent being not first obtained before, if there bee none having any conscience at all, but that the same dulle examined euerie night when he goeth vnto his bed, telleth him that he would not thus himselfe be serued: let this rule then be sufficient to teach him, that he also ought not to marie without the well liking and agreement of his father and mother. Wouldest not thou whatsoever thou art, that thy childe, if thou carrie any fatherly mind towards him, should in his matching and marrieng be aduised and directed by thee? And darest thou affiance and assure thy selfe vnto an other in the most honorable and holie estate of mariage, without the knowledge and counsell of thy father? Thou thy selfe the more dearly and tenderlie thou louest thine owne childe, the more deeplie wilt thou bee touched with griefe and sorrowe in thy verie innermost bowels and affections, he, if he bestowe himselfe contrarie to thy liking, and can those that begat thee, thinkest thou, reioice and bee glad, when thou hast wedded contrarie vnto their mind and good liking? Doe therefore as thou wouldest be done vnto: Marie with the consent of thy parentes, as thou wouldest that thy children should doe with thine. And as

thou wouldest not that those vnder thy gouernment should ioin in matrimonie against thy will, so in any case take heed, that thou contract not thy self according to thine own pleasure, but stay for the direction and good aduice of thy father, for it is an hard matter to haue the testimonie of thine owne conscience to bee alwaies' accusing thee that thou hast done amisse, and contrarie vnto that obedience, the which thou owest vnto thy superiours, and lookest also that thy children should performe vnto thee.

The second
reason taken
from the au-
thority of pa-
rents ouer
their children

Secondlie, that these priuie contracts, that is to say, such as are made in secret, or in corners, or otherwise in place neuer so publique without the consent of the parents, are not lawful, may this way more plainly appeare, if we weigh & consider, that children are not at their owne libertie, & disposition, nor (as they say) their owne-men, but vnder the authority and power of their parentes, like as seruantes are at the disposing of their maisters. Nay they are so much more bound vnto their fathers & mothers, then seruants are, or can be vnder the power of their maisters, by howe much next vnder God, they do oue their verie being vnto those that begat them, vvhich they doe not vnto their maisters, & therefore is the band of their obedience greater and straighter vnto their fathers, then is that of seruants vnto their maisters. Hereof it followeth that those vvhich are alike subiect vnto the

the

the gouernment of others, are also alike debarred from the same freedoms & liberties, that otherwile, if they were not thus subiect, they might enioy: but seruants and children are tied with a like and equall band of subiection, insomuch that if in this behalfe ther be any ods, it is in this, that children owe more dutie vnto their fathers then seruantes vnto their maisters, as was prooued a litle before: they are therefore debarred from the same libertie and freedome, whereof ensueth, that if seruantes haue not this libertie without the leaue of their maisters to betake themselves vnto others, no more may children without the authoritie of their parentes, affiance and betroth themselves in marriage vnto others: but seruants are by the lawes, as the learned doe knowe (and I speake of the lawes and seruants, not as they are with vs at this day, but as they were in the more ancient and elder times) restrained of this libertie to place themselves with others against the will of their maisters, therefore children may not giue themselves in matrimonie vnto others without the consent of their progenitors. And albeit that by the lawes of our own land nowe in force there bee as yet no prouiso made against the matching of seruants without the approbation and allowance of their maisters, yet (vnder the correction of others) it seemeth vnto me great reason, that where there are no parents, euen in those places the

The lawes of elder times restrain seruants from liberty at their owne pleasure to betake themselves to others without the leaue of their maisters.

Exod. 21.

Leuit. 25.

Deut. 15. 12

seruants, should take the direction of their godly maisters in this behalfe, in vvhich my iudgement I am not singular, but can, if need be auouch mine assertion by the authoritie of the learned. But what shall this neede, when as the equitie hereof may bee inferred of that which we read in the books of Moses, where, such as please with diligence to conferre the places, they may easily find, that such seruants as were Ebrues, though the time of their seruice was shorter then was theirs, which were strangers and of other nations, yet during the space of their yeares they had to serue in, they were not to marie at their owne libertie, but their maisters hand bare the chiefe stroke in this busines. This course beeing obserued in the Ebrue seruants, it will not, as I take it be gain-said, that seruants of other people and countries, whose bondage in manie respects was far heauier, were likewise deprived of this libertie of marrying, during the time of their seruitude and thraldom. without the appointment of their Lordes and maisters: yet hereby is not meant to preiudicate or impeach, much lesse to controlle the libertie of our lawes, or law-makers, in such cases as God hath left free vnto them, but onely out of that which God himselfe set downe vnto his owne people in debarring seruants, as seruants to make their owne choise in cases of mariage, to prooue that children, which are in as great or rather greater subiection vnto their

their fathers authority, are likewise bound by as hard a band to tarie for the consent of their parentes in their contractes of matrimonie.

Thirdlie, the great soueraintie, rule & power that by the law of Moses was giuen vnto the Iewish fathers ouer their children, and by the ordinances of the Romanes to the parents ouer their sonnes and daughters, by vertue whereof the one in cases of necessitie might sel their children for bondslaues to releue themselues, and the other might kill them in reuenge of their owne priuate iniuries done vnto themselues, or publique enormities offered vnto others, albeit that of Moses may be thought to be permitted, like as other thinges for a time in regard of the hardnesse of their heart, and this of the Romanes deserue iustlie to bee condemned as barbarous, cruell, and sauage, yet doe they both argue, that if parents authoritie were in those times so large in thinges that seeme so hardlie to be digested, that they had a far greater authoritie in those matters & duties, the which might be performed with more conscience, and much lesse difficultie and danger, namelie in bearing chiefest sway in the marriage of their children, and in other causes of like dutifull obedience.

To this may be added, that the children are worthelie to be reckoned among the goodes and substance of their fathers, and that by a more especiall right then any thing els, the

The third reason taken from the large iurisdiction and power the which in ancient times hath bin permitted vnto parentes ouer their childre, the which custome, albeit that it be not simply to be allowed yet it prooueth their soueraintie in other matters to be well perfourmed by their children without any inconuenience.

The fourth reason from the condition of goods vnto the power that the owners haue ouer the same

the which belongeth vnto their possession, as those which are more neerlie linked and ioyned vnto them, and which cost them more dearlie, being flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, and without whom, they had neuer bene: so that they owe themselues wholly vnto them in all maner of obedience and dutifull affection, and shall in seeking to betteroth themselues at their owne pleasures, not regarding to haue the good will and leaue of their parentes, deale as preposterouslie, and ouerthwartlie, as if the goodes should goe about to dispose the owner and possessor of the same, and not be disposed and ordered by those vnto whom the possession and propertie of the same doeth by right and equitie belong and appertaine; for it standeth with great reason, that the owner dispose of the goodes, and not contrariwise the goodes of the owner, which were in deed a thing verie absurd or contrarie to all reason. Now if any shall doubt, whether that the children bee to be reckoned among the goodes of their parentes or no, he seemeth to bee ignorant of that point the which the deuill himselfe well enough vnderstood, as we may reade in the first of Iob, where it is set downe, that when God gaue him leaue to deale withal that Iob had, he medleth with his sonnes and daughters, as well as with his seruants, and rest of his substance taking them also to be a portion of the same. Wherefore euen in this that children

Children are
the goodes of
the parents.

dren are their fathers riches (as it is the common saying) they must not bestow themselves but must be bestowed of their parents, whose goods they are. And least any man shoulde contemne this as a weake and childish reason let him know, that the learned Father Theodorus Beza vseth it, although not in the same iust number of wordes, yet in this verie selfe same argument, and to the selfe same purpose, in his booke *de repudijs & diuortijs*, where his iudgement may bee further seene to iumpe with mine fullie in this question, as mine also in this behalfe agreeth with the opinion of al the learned.

And it seemeth not to bee much impertinent from this place, the which wee read in the booke of Numbers concerning Vowes, where among other things we doe finde, that the vowes which were made by the children without the priuitie and consent of the fathers, and of the wiues without the liking and allowance of their husbendes were altogether vnlawfull and of no force. And the reason according to true meaning of the place, is geuen by the best Interpreters, because neither children, nor wines are *sui iuris*, that is, at their owne libertie and appointment, but vnder the rule and gouernment of others, namelie of their parentes and husbands. As therefore to make a vow vnto the Lord, being in it selfe and of it owne nature an holy and acceptable action vnto God, and wherewith

The first reason from the vneffectualnes of vowes without the consent of parents, and husbands in their children and wines.

he is well pleased, is notwithstanding in children vnlawfull, because it is such an action as they onlie may performe which are free and at their owne disposition, the which they are not: so in like maner to consent in matrimonie, although in it selfe it be both honett & lawfull, yet is it not an action of force in children, without the consent and allowance of their parentes, because that children are not free & at their own libertie, but by the lawes both of God and man tied and bound vnto the subiection of their fathers, as hath at large bene shewed before, and through the whole discourse of this treatise is to be prooued also hereafter.

The sixt reason from the lawes in Exodus, of entring of maids, and the fathers selling their daughters for seruants.

In the 22. of Exodus there is a law concerning the intising of maids (a practise this day too common, because there is not discipline sharpe enough ministred to repress it) and in the chapter before going there is another constitution as touching fathers, that to releue their owne necessities are constrained to sell their daughters for seruants: by the first whereof it appeareth, that the contract of children without the consent of their parentes, is not auailable, or of anie force: and by the second may easilie be gathered that seruants were not at libertie to make their owne choise in marriage, but that the right thereof appertained vnto their maisters, both places iointlie concluding flatlie for me, that both children & seruants as *Res dominorum*: that is, the goodes of their

their owners, are not, as in other cases of lesse waight, so in like sort in that matter of greater importance, namely the bestowing of themselves in wedlocke for to follow the violent streame of their owne pleasing affections, but to be ordered and guided by the rule of their fathers and maisters. I will set downe the severall wordes of the law in both these cases, that being diligentlie obserued and marked, fathers and maisters may learne what was the authoritie in the mariage of their children & seruants, and that these likewise may vnderstand what is their part & dutie in these considerations. The wordes for intising of maides are these: *And if a man intise a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall endow her and take her to wife: if her father refuse to giue her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowrie of Virgins.* Here is expressely set downe, that albeit the two parties were fullie agreed, yet is the match not to goe forward, vnlesse the father also doe giue his consent. Now for the father his selling of his daughter, to redeeme his owne need and pouertie, thus speaketh the lawgiuer in the chapter afore going: *Likewise if a man sell his daughter to be a seruant, she shall not goe out as mens seruants doe. If she please not her maister, who hath betrothed her vnto himselfe, then shall he cause to buy her, he shall haue no power to sell her to a strange people, seeing he despised or deflowred her. But if he hath betrothed her vnto his senn, he*

Exodus. 22.

16. 17

Exod. 21. 7. &

9.

shall

Exod. 21.

Leuit. 25.

Deut. 15. 12

seruants, should take the direction of their godly maisters in this behalfe, in vvhich my iudgement I am not singular, but can, if need be auouch mine assertion by the authoritie of the learned But what shall this neede, when as the equitie hereof may bee inferred of that which we read in the books of Moses, where, such as please with diligence to conferre the places, they may easily find, that such seruants as were Ebrues, though the time of their seruice was shorter then was theirs, which were strangers and of other nations, yet during the space of their yeares they had to serue in, they were not to marie at their owne libertie, but their maisters hand bare the chiefe stroke in this busines. This course beeing obserued in the Ebrue seruants, it will not, as I take it be gain-said, that seruants of other people and countries, whose bondage in manie respects was far heauier, were likewise deprived of this libertie of marrying, during the time of their seruitude and thraldom. without the appointment of their Lordes and maisters: yet hereby is not meant to preiudicate or impeach, much lesse to controlle the libertie of our lawes, or law-makers, in such cases as God hath left free vnto them, but onely out of that which God himselfe set downe vnto his owne people in debarring seruants, as seruants to make their owne choise in cases of marriage, to prooue that children, which are in as great or rather greater subiection vnto their

their fathers authority, are likewise bound by as hard a band to tarie for the consent of their parentes in their contractions of matrimonie.

Thirdlie, the great soueraintie, rule & power that by the law of Moses was giuen vnto the Iewish fathers ouer their children, and by the ordinances of the Romanes to the parents ouer their sonnes and daughters, by vertue whereof the one in cases of necessitie might sel their children for bondslaves to releue themselves, and the other might kill them in reuenge of their owne priuate iniuries done vnto themselves, or publique enormities offered vnto others, albeit that of Moses may be thought to be permitted, like as other things for a time in regard of the hardnesse of their heart, and this of the Romanes deserue iustlie to bee condemned as barbarous, cruell, and sauage, yet doe they both argue, that if parents authoritie were in those times so large in things that seeme so hardlie to be digested, that they had a far greater authoritie in those matters & duties, the which might be performed with more conscience, and much lesse difficultie and danger, namelie in bearing chiefest sway in the marriage of their children, and in other causes of like dutifull obedience.

To this may be added, that the children are worthelie to be reckoned among the goodes and substance of their fathers, and that by a more especiall right then any thing els, the

The third reason taken from the large iurisdiction and power the which in ancient times hath bin permitted vnto parentes ouer their childre, the which custome, albeit that it be not simply to be allowed yet it prooueth their soueraintie in other matters to be well permitted by their children without any inconuenience.

The fourth reason from the condition of goods vnto the power that the owners haue ouer the same

the which belongeth vnto their possession; as those which are more neerlie linked and ioyned vnto them, and which cost them more dearlie, being flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, and without whom, they had neuer bene: so that they owe themselues wholly vnto them in all maner of obedience and dutifull affection, and shall in seeking to betroth themselues at their owne pleasures, not regarding to haue the good will and leaue of their parentes, deale as preposterouslie, and ouerthwartlie, as if the goodes should goe about to dispose the owner and possessor of the same, and not be disposed and ordered by those vnto whom the possession and propertie of the same doeth by right and equitie belong and appertaine; for it standeth with great reason, that the owner dispose of the goodes, and not contrariwise the goodes of the owner, which were in deed a thing verie absurd or contrarie to all reason. Now if any shall doubt, whether that the children bee to be reckoned among the goodes of their parentes or no, he seemeth to bee ignorant of that point the which the deuill himselfe well enough vnderstood, as we may reade in the first of Iob, where it is set downe, that when God gaue him leaue to deale withal that Iob had, he medleth with his sonnes and daughters, as well as with his seruants, and rest of his substance taking them also to be a portion of the same. Wherefore euen in this that children

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he is well pleased, is notwithstanding in children vnlawfull, because it is such an action as they onlie may performe which are free and at their owne disposition, the which they are not: so in like maner to consent in matrimonie, although in it selfe it be both honest & lawfull, yet is it not an action of force in children, without the consent and allowance of their parentes, because that children are not free & at their own libertie, but by the lawes both of God and man tied and bound vnto the subiection of their fathers, as hath at large bene shewed before, and through the whole discourse of this treatise is to be prooued also hereafter.

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their owners, are not, as in other cases of lesse waight, so in like sort in that matter of greater importance, namely the bestowing of themselves in wedlocke for to follow the violent streame of their owne pleasing affections, but to be ordered and guided by the rule of their fathers and maisters. I will set downe the severall wordes of the law in both these cases, that being diligentlie obserued and marked, fathers and maisters may learne what was the authoritie in the mariage of their children & seruants, and that these likewise may vnderstand what is their part & dutie in these considerations. The wordes for intising of maides are these: *And if a man intise a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall endow her and take her to wife: if her father refuse to giue her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowrie of Virgins.* Here is expresse set downe, that albeit the two parties were fullie agreed, yet is the match not to goe forward, vnlesse the father also doe giue his consent. Now for the father his selling of his daughter, to redeeme his owne need and pouertie, thus speaketh the lawgiuer in the chapter afore going: *Likewise if a man sell his daughter to be a seruant, she shall not goe out as mens seruants doe. If she please not her maister, who hath betrothed her vnto himselfe, then shall he cause to buy her, he shall haue no power to sell her to a strange people, seeing he despised or deflowred her. But if he hath betrothed her vnto his senne, he shall*

Exodus. 22.

16. 17

Exod. 21. 7. 8

9.

shall deale with her according to the custome of the daughters. So that ye see howe the maiden in this sort sold to be a seruant by her father, became by this sale bound to the power of her maister, to bee at his appointing in the case of marrying, and such was the condition of all other seruants by the law of God in this respect, and that the sonnes also were not left vnto their owne direction, no although that they were otherwise free, besides that this place doth prooue the same, directly affirming that the father of the free son might betroth him vnto his bond maid, it shall in his place sufficientlie henceforward likewise appeare.

The seventh
reason draw-
en from the
commande-
ment: Honor
thy father &
mother. &c.

Besides al this what clearer euidence can we haue on our side, then the fift commandemēt, in the which childrē are cōmanded to honor their fathers and mothers, with a blessing promised to those which perform the same: whereby we gather by the nature of contraries, that there is a curse also belonging vnto all those children that shal dishonor them. And in that God willeth that the parentes by their children should be honoured, he meaneth, that they should in all humilitie and modestie reuerence them, with all dutifull submission, be obedient vnto them, and with all willingnes shew themselues thankfull for their procreation, education, sustentation, and all other benefites, that vnder God they haue receiued from them, being readie by all meanes they possible may, ἀντιπαράστην, that is, to imitate
and

and expresse towards them the nature of the Storke, whose propertie (as they write of the) is to provide meat, and feed their dams, when through age they grow so olde, that they are not able for to help themselves, that is to say, they must to their verie utmost seeke to make them recompence and requitall of some part of those vnrequitable paines the which their louing parentes haue taken with them, and make some amends for the vnconteruailable kindnes that they haue shewed towards them. But where they bestowe themselves in marriage without the consent of their parentes, there they do fault and make a breach of dutie in all these three respectes, that is to say, they neither reuerence, obey, nor shew themselves thankful vnto them. For, reuerence consisteth in this, that we carie towards them a certaine honest and modest shamefastnes joyned with a bashfull awfulness & standing in feare of the which worketh in vs a conceiuing of such an opinion and estimation of them, as that we haue an especiall respect and regard of them in doing or not doing of things, neither of a care to please them, or of a feare to offend them. Obedience herein sheweth forth it selfe, in that willinglie without murmuring or grudging we be willing to be ordered, directed, guided, and ruled by them, being ready to do all lawfull thinges the which they command vs, & to refraine from those things the which they shall forbid vs. Thankfulnesse besides

besides that, there are many other branches, is alwaies mindful of benefits receiued, and therefore carrieth continually a vigilant and watchfull eie towards the partie by whome it hath bene pleased, that no discourtesie in any case bee offered, or anie occasion ministred, whereby he may conceiue vnkindnes. And by this familiar descriptiō of these three heades, whereof standeth chieflie the honor due vnto parentes, we may clearlie see, that those which in wedding tarie not for the consent of their fathers and mothers, do neither stand in any awfull feare of them, as who they would be loth to offend or displease, nor yet giue ouer themselues in all thinges to be gouerned and aduised by them, or haue any regard that they be not causers to make their friendes or parents conceiue hardlie and vnkindlie of them, when as it is more then manifest, that in matters concerning their duety towards their parentes, no greefe cutteth neerer vnto the heart then this, when they entangle themselues contrarie vnto their minde and liking. And therefore such children as match in this sort, as it were in spite of the teeth of their fathers and mothers are neither reuerent, obedient, nor thankfull vnto them, and so consequentlie they doe not honour them, wherby they incur and runne into the curse of God, the which must without true and vnfeigned repentance pull downe vpon the heades of themselues and their

their families the fearfull plagues of God. His heauie and hot indignation against them to their vtter subuersion, decay and ruine,

The eight
reason from
the place of
P. aule. Collof.
3. 20.

S. Paule in his epistle vnto the collossians, willeth children to bee obedient vnto their parents in al things, & giueth a reason therof :

saying, *For that is well pleasing vnto the Lord.*

Out of this place I reason after this maner, to prooue that the good wil of the parents must be sought for & obtained by the children in their contracts of mariage. Whatsoever pleaseth God, the same ought of al children to be practised so far forth as it concerneth their place & calling: but to marie with the cōsent of parents is a thing that pleaseth God, therefore children in their mariages ought to haue the consent & allowance of their parēts. That euerie one in his calling ought to labor to do that thing which pleaseth God, I take to be a case so cleare, that no man doubteth of the same so that to go about to prooue this were as needles a thing, as to labor to prooue that water is moist, fire is hot, or that it is day at high noone. If any thing in the former reason be denied, it wil be this, that to mary with the consent of the parents pleaseth not God, the which although it be as euident & apparent as the former, and cānot be denied of any that hath a forehead at al (for who, except he cary a face of brasse, can be doubtfull of this, that God is well pleased with the matching of children by the consent of their parents, provided alwaies that the mariage be in his feare

the

the which caution is to be obserued through out this whole controuerſie, either handled alreadie or to be touched hereafter) yet for the ſake of the ſimpler ſort, the which of ignorāce for the moſt part offend in this kinde of priuie contractes, I will make this point plaine alſo after this maner. All obedience vnto parents is wel pleaſing to the Lord, but for the ſons to take wiues, & the daughters to take husbands with the liking and approouing of their fathers and mothers, is an eſpeciall obedience vnto them, and ſuch as all parentes wiſh euen with all their heart to haue in al their children performed towards them, therefore to marie with the conſent of parents is ſuch an action wherewith God is well pleaſed. The verie wordes of Paule, where he ſaieth, *Children obey your parentes in all things*, doe ſufficientlie warrant, that all obedience vnto parentes is wel pleaſing vnto God, and the ſame is likewise auouched by Paule before in the epiſtle vnto the Ephesians, where ſpeaking of the dutie of children, he hath theſe words,

Ephes. 6. 1. *Children obey your parentes in the Lord*: ſetting downe this reaſon, *for it is right*. And that fathers and mothers do hold themſelues obeyed, when their children be ruled and ordered by them in the choiſe of their wiues and husbands, is ſo euident, that no man can gainsay it. It muſt therefore needes follow, that God is well pleaſed, when they do get them yoakefellowes with the conſent of
their

their parents. Nay, as it is trueth not to bee doubted of, that God his fauour and allowance goeth alwaies with those espousals, or betrothings the which are ratified and established with the assent of those that bare vs, and vnto whom we doe owe our being, because that herein we do perform a chiefe point of obedience, the which God looketh for, and requireth at our hands: so on the contrarie, whē we shal ioin our selues in the band of matrimony, & make no reckoning of the authoritie of our superiours, stepping in betweene, God cannot behold those bridals with a cheerefull and a smyling countenance but is displeased, and frowneth at the same, because that we haue forgotten our selues in a principall part of our child-like and dutifull obedience. For if we must submit our selues, and lay downe our handes vnder the feet of our parentes in all things, yeelding our obedience in the verie smallest causes, because God hath so commanded, as the Apostle fully in so many wordes doth clearly teach vs, then doubtles much more in the case of marrying (a matter of such force & importance, as whereupon for the most part dependeth our making or marring) we ought willinglie to put our necks vnder the wholsome yoke of their fatherlie power, vpon whose consent or refusall lieth the establishing or disanulling of our handfasting our selues without their agreement thereunt o.

But

The ninth
reason, toge-
ther with the
answering of
an obiection
concerning
the restraint
of childrens
obedience.

But it will here be replied, that Paule him-
selfe in a kind of shew of some contrarietie,
restraineth the general obedience of children
commanded in the third to the Collossians to
to bee perfourmed vnto their parentes in all
things and draweth the same into a more
straight and narrowe compasse in his Epistle
vnto the Ephesians, where he will haue their
dutie to bee no further yeilded vnto them
then in the Lord, and therefore vnlesse it may
plainlie be prooued, that to haue the consent
of parentes in mariage is a thing commanded
by the word of God, children are freed & set
at libertie from giuing obedience thereunto.
I answere, that the one place is a good com-
ment and exposition vnto the other, so that
this precept: *Children obey your parentes in all
things*, ought worthelie to bee expounded by
that other: *Children obey your parentes in the
Lord*: that is (as I expound it, letting goe all
other interpretations) in all such things as
are not against the Lorde, or which in the
Scriptures are commaunded by the Lord.
Which interpretation I doe the rather im-
brace, because I see it to bee warranted by the
answere the which Peter & Iohn in the A&S
doe make vnto the chiefe rulers of the Syna-
gogue, whereby they excuse themselues for
not obeying their inhibition forbidding them
to preach any more in the name of Iesus, say-
ing, *Whether it be right in the sight of God, to
obey you rather then God iudge ye.* Whereby

we are taught, that not onelie in the commandements of our parentes, but also of all other our superiours be they Kinges, rulers or Magistrates of any other condition whatsoever, all which are comprehended vnder the name of parentes, that if they inioine vs to do any thing against that obedience the which we owe vnto God, we are not indeed violēt-lie to resist, but we must with patience abide such punishment as they shall lay vpon vs, rather then in obeying them we should disobey God, vnto whom of good right wee are bound aboue and before al others be they of neuer so high and excellent places. For there is a double obedience, that is, a certaine first, chief, & most soueraign obediēce the which is proper and belongeth vnto God, and a secundarie or inferiour obedience the which is due and appertaining vnto men. So that in all our actions what soeuer belongeth vnto this life this is a most generall rule the which admitteth or receiueth none exception: *God must be obeyed before, or rather then men.* To returne therefore vnto the matter in hand, the obedience of children to their parentes must (I grant) be limited and bounded within the railes and listes of our obedience peculiar vnto God, that is to say, Childré are no further to obey the commandements of their parentes, then so far forth as the same be answerable and agreeable vnto the commandements of God. But this neuer a whit relieueth

A most generall rule the which admitteth no exception.

their bad and vnfollowable course the which in marriage will be their owne caruers, and make their owne choise without the consent and allowing of their parents, the which, besides that hath hitherto bene alleaged, we will yet further more largelie and more expresse prooue out of the word of God, and confirme, that so it ought to be.

And now are we come indeed vnto a more higher, and neerer point, and the which will seeme stranger both vnto a great sort of parents, and also serue verie stronglie to curbe the vnbrideled & stay-les affections of an infinite number of inconsiderate and vnaduised youthes (if by the warrant of the word of God they may be stayd) when as it shall be plainlie laid downe vnto them, that not only they are in their handfastings & making sure in mariage to haue the consent of their fathers and mothers, and that, not seeking for the same, they breake Gods commandement, but also when it shall be shewed, that choise of wiues and husbands for them, is not in their power, but in the authoritie of their fathers, and that this, both in plaine wordes is set downe in the scriptures, and may moreouer be prooued by many examples as a generall vse and custome to haue bene obserued not onely of the godlier sort among the Iewes, but also among the gentiles, which had no other direction but the law of nature : When I say, it shall be euidentlie prooued, that the choise

choise in mariage, of husbands and wiues for their sonnes and daughters, was in the Parents, and not in the children, I thinke there will no question at all afterwards bee made, whether the consent of the parents be requisite to be had or no in the mariage of their children, forasmuch as if it be not in the children to make their owne choise, much lesse may they marie without their parents liking: for those that of themselues may not doe the lesser, cannot be said to bee at their owne libertie to doe the greater: but children in matters of mariage may not do the lesser, that is, make their owne choise, which is a lesse thing then to marie without consent, therefore it must of necessitie follow, that in marying they must haue the consent of their parentes.

Children in mariage may not make their owne choise, therefore much lesse ought they marie without their friends consent,

That children may not make their owne choise in marying, I prooue after this maner: No childe may take vpon him the duetie and office of his father: To make choise of husbandes and wiues for sonnes & daughters in mariage, is the duetie and office of fathers: therefore children in mariage may not make their owne choise, and so consequently may not marie without the cōsent of their fathers. The first, that children may not take vpon the office of their fathers, I take as graunted. The second, that parents ought to take wiues vnto their sonnes, and husbandes vnto their daughters, I will prooue by the commandement of God in sundrie places, and by mani-

fest reason drawn from those places. And in this point, If I bestow the more labour, I shall the rather be borne withall, because it is the most waightie part of al this discourse, wherein, if I shal happely, or rather vn-happilie, of anie be deemed tedious or ouerlong, the profitableness of the matter, if God gūe grace, that being of ignorance in the most neglected before, it may now vpon knowledge be put in diligent practise hereafter, shall easily (I trust) procure my pardon. And my good hope and earnest prayer also is, that this my trauaile shall not be in vaine, but that al godlie fathers and mothers seeing clearly at the length what charge by God himselfe is laide vpon them, will be carefull in time to make meete choise for their children, & that all dutifull and obedient sonnes and daughters vnderstanding that it is no deuise of man, but the expresse commandemēt of God that their fathers & mothers should provide the wiues & husbands, wil cease henceforth to take vpo them the office of their parentes, and with all willingnes, be contēt to stand in these cases to the choise of their elders, which they shall make for the in the feare of the Lord, & agreeably vnto his word, or at least wise in no case assure themselues, vnlesse themselues be sure of their consent.

Now let vs see the places of Scripture, by which it may appeare that the choise of husbands for the daughters, and of wiues for the sonnes

sonnes is by the commandement of God himselfe laid vpon the parentes, concerning which matter, in the booke of Deuteronomy we read thus. *Neither shalt thou make marriages with thē* (he speaketh of the seuen nations, the which by the Iewes were vtterly to bee rooted out) *neither giue thy daughter vnto his son, nor take his daughter vnto thy sonne.* Here God giueth an especial charge vnto al fathers among the Iewish natiō, that at no hand they should place in mariage, eitheir their sonnes with the daughters of those nations, or take of their sons to be husbands for their daughters, the which precept had bin in vain, if they had not had this power and authoritie ouer their children, or if their sons and daughters had bene at their own libertie in these cases to haue made their owne choise, for they might easilie haue replied, that their children in these pointes were not to be at their command, and the children might haue complained of the hard dealing of their fathers in debarring thē their right in making their owne matches, if any such priuiledge had belonged vnto them: but the fathers neither taking any exception against God, to excuse themselves from this dutie, nor the sonnes pleading that by this lawe their interest shoulde be impeached, doth argue sufficientlie that it was the ordinarie course of that time for parentes to giue their children in mariage, and that their children were wel content with their fa-

Places of
scripture.
proouing that
fathers ought
to provide
wiues & hus-
bands for their
sonnes and
daughters.
Deut. 7. 3.

thers doings in this behalfe.

Obiection.

It will here peradventure be saide, That God by making this law, setteth not downe an order the which he would haue generally to be obserued of the parentes in all matches of their children, yea euen with their owne people and nation, but onelie directeth them what they should doe concerning mariage of their sonnes and daughters among those seuen accursed nations, & this also to preuent a mischiefe, least that by making and ioyning any such affinitie, they might be pulled and drawen away from the true worship and seruice of God vnto idolatrie and superstition. I

Answer.

answere, that God, when he gaue vnto them this commandement, had indeed an especiall regard to meet with before hand this danger of hauing his people caried by such matches to run a whoring after strange Goddes, but this notwithstanding proueth not, that the fathers libertie to place his children in wedlock was not general amōg the people of his own nation, but that hee had this authoritie to re-
 straine them onelie from marying with that wicked people for feare of spirituall infection and pollution: for that they had this power ouer their children in prouiding the marriage euen within their own land, and limits of their owne countrie, it is most clearlie to be seene in the last chapter of the booke of Iudges, where the Israelites hauing geuen that great and fearfull ouerthrowe vnto their
 brethren

brethren the Beniamites, for their maintenance of that most horrible outrage in defiling in verie shamefull and beastlie maner of the Levites concubine, bound themselves by a solemne oth, and sware, saying: *None of vs shal giue his daughter vnto the Beniamits to wife.* This oath for my part (reseruing to others their contrarie iudgment) I doe not in anie case allowe, but condemne the same as rash, and vnaduised, the which trulie repenting themselves of their rashnes, they might with farre better conscience haue broken then kept, and I could alleadge many reasons to confirme mine opinion, but that is not appertaining to this present argument, neither yet any part of my purpose in this place, nor at this time, onely I bring it to shew, that hereby it is manifest that they made no doubt of their libertie in disposing of their children in mariage, nor of their readines to obey them in that behalfe, for if they might not ouerrule them in this matter, or their children had bin to make their owne choise, they had bene worthy of double blame, both in taking vpon them the placing of their daughters, and also in binding themselves with an oth for the due execution and performance of that thing, the which they had no right to lay vpo them.

And howsoeuer it be that this place may be thought of some, not of force sufficient to warrant this authoritie of Parentes, in making the choise for their sonnes and daugh-

The rashnesse of the Israelites taketh not away their right in making choise for the in their marriages.

ters in their marriages, because the oath was taken vnaduisedlie (albeit that their offending in one thing, be not plea good inough to disfranchize them of their freedome and libertie in an other thing) yet if the cause had bene good, it shall appeare by an other place, that they might by oath haue bound themselves. for the not giuing of their daughters in mariage, whereby may bee gathered that the choise in these cases lay in the parentes, and not in their children: for herein they fault in this action, not that they seeke to keepe their right and authoritie in prouiding for their children, but in that they make an oath both rash, and full of crueltie against their brethren.

Now that the choise was in parents of prouiding wiues & husbands for their children and in such sort, that they might in honest & godlie matches bind themselves so to do, it is certaine by that which we reade in the last chapiter of the booke of Nehemiah, who caused manie of them that were returned from the captiuitie, not onely to take an oath that they would not take wiues vnto their sonnes nor husbands vnto their daughters of the strange nations there specified, but also made them to curse and ban themselves, and to wish heauie iudgmentes and plagues of God to fall vpon them, if they should doe the contrarie.

That the mater may be out of all doubt & controuer-

controuerſie, it ſhall not grieue me to ſette
 downe the wordes as they lie in the text: *In*
thoſe daies alſo (ſaieth Nehemiah) I ſaw Iewes Nehem. 13.
that married wiues of Aſhdod, of Ammon, and of 23, 24.
Moab. And their childrē ſpake halfe in the ſpeech
of Aſhdod, and could not ſpeake in the Iewes lan-
guage, and according to the language of the one
people, and of the other people. Then I reproofed
thē, and curſed them, and ſmote certaine of thē,
& pulled of their hair, and took an oth of thē by
God: ye ſhall not giue your daughters vnto their
ſonnes, neither ſhall you take of their daughters
vnto your ſonnes, nor for your ſelues. Whoſo-
uer ſhall with him ſelſe weigh and conſider
of this moſt excellent and worthy man, of his
true godlineſſe and zeale in religion, of his
great care & forwardnes to build vp the citie
and Temple, of his faithfulnes in his gouern-
ment and rule ouer the people committed to
his charge, he may not go about to offer vnto
him this iniurie, inſomuch as once dreaming
that a man of his holines, religion, zeale, wiſ-
dome, and godlineſſe would ſo much as make
the very leaſt motion of any vnlawful matter
to his people, much leſſe enforce thē by oath
to enter into ſuch a courſe, whereby they
might eaſilie haue bin periured had they not
in this caſe well knowen their fatherlie pow-
er ouer their children, and bene perſwaded of
their tractable readines in this matter to bee
ruled by them. Such was the diſcipline of that
time, and in ſuch awe ſtood dutifull children
 vnto

vnto their louing fathers in those daies, that being therennto required by the magistrate, they durst not onely pawne their credit, but that which more is, giue their oath, and hazard their conscience, vpon the assured confidence which they reposed in their childrens willingnes to betake & betroth themselves vnto such yokefellowes as they should appoint and make choise of for them in honest matrimonie to lead their liues withall. Yet doe I not thinke the contrarie, but that in those ages, like as in our time there were many both sonnes and daughters, which are like vnrule coltes and vntamed heifers could not be brought vnto this passe, nor yet be yoked within this bow, but the sturdie frowardnes of some certaine, is no disproofof the dutifull obedience of the better sort, neither was there anie more required of the fathers, then that according vnto God his commandement, so far as in them lay, they should doe their partes to keep their children within this compasse: that is to say, they were to prouide matches for them within their owne people, to charge them in regard of that honour, the which by God his commandement they did owe vnto them, that they yeelded vnto their fathers choise, and hauing gone thus far, they haue sufficientlie done that which vnto them belonged, and for the rest, they were to leaue their rulelesse children vnto the iudgméts of God, and correction of the magistrate, who
in

in cases of disobedience, where the authority of parents could beare no sway, was by God himselfe appointed to minister correction according vnto the qualitie of the transgression. Deut 27, 18.

To make an end of this ninth reason, in the which I may be thought to haue dwelled too long, I will shut vp this place with an authoritie taken out of the prophet Ieremie, & with the iudgment of M. Caluin (a most worthy instrument of Christ his Church in our time) vpon the same, the which shall strike this matter stone dead (as they say) and so goe on to other proofes, and these shall serue as a strong naile to fasten all the rest together, & to make sure all the other testimonies of scripture in this foresaid ninth reason, already quoted, for the faithfull alleadging of the which places, vnto such end and purpose, and by the holie Ghost they are directed, besides that, I haue the testimonie of a cleare conscience to beare witnesse of my fearfull carefulnesse to deale sincerelie and faithfullie in the handling of the word of God, If I shall be therunto at any time hereafter vrged, I can bring also the confirmation of the best and most learned writers.

Ieremie in the 29 chapter of his prophesie among other reasons the which hee vseth to comfort the people in their long & hard captiuitie, and to put them in hope that they shall assuredlie return, at the length speaketh vnto

A most strong place out of Ieremie to proue that that the choise wa. in parents to prouide fit matches for their children in marriage.

Ierem. 29. 6.

vnto them by the commandement of God after this maner: *Take you wiues, & beget sons & daughters, and take wiues for your sonnes, and giue your daughtes to husbands, that they may beare sonnes and daughters, that you may be increased there and not be diminished.* Vpon this place Calvin writeth after this maner. Whereas (saith he) the prophet willeth them to *take wiues for their sons, and to giue their daughters to be married*, this is according to the lawfull order and course of nature, because that this were too preposterous, or ouerthwart and topsitury dealing, that yoong men and maidens, should get them either husbandes or wiues at their owne lust and pleasure. God therefore in this place speaketh according vnto the common rule, when as hee commandeth yoong men to be linked in matrimonie no otherwise, but by the commandement of their parentes: and maidens also not to marie any husbands, but such as to whom they shal be giuen. Here you may see in few words confirmed that, which in so manie I haue at large set downe before: where first it is to be noted, that childrens marying according to the choise of their parentes, is a thing commanded by God. Secondlie, that it is agreeable vnto the law of nature. Thirdlie, that it was a generall rule and common practise. Fourthly, that the contrarie dealing is preposterous and ouerthwart, and as far out of square and order, as if the cart should be placed

Four especiall
poyntes to be
noted out of
the wordes of
Caluin.

God as
sons &
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ey may
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placed and set before the horse. And marke further, that in all these places cited in this ninth reason, God saith not, that parentes if they wil, may prouide wiues for their sonnes, and husbandes for their daughters: That it were meete and requisite that it should be so, but vseth euerie where the imperatiue mood, that is, commandeth that it be so, and leaueth it not at randome to our discretion to choose whether we will haue it to bee so, or otherwise, to that end that we should knowe, that if wee that are parentes shall neglect our duties in this behalse, wee shall not passe away with the matter slightlie and lightlie, as if it were a iest & a trifle, but that we shall answer for it, as for a transgression and breach of his commandement.

It is a coman-
dement, & not
a permission,
that parentes
in mariage
should
make choise
for their chil-
dren.

Hauiug therefore giuen this breefe caueat and warning blow vnto fathers and mothers to think hereafter more aduisedlie vpon their duties in bestowing of their children, I take my leaue and farewell of this reason, giuing al yoong men and maidens in like maner to vnderstand, that if they shal henceforth refuse to be ordered and directed by their parentes, they shall be found rebels against God, transgressors against the law of nature, breakers of the common rule and custome of all well gouerned children, and such, so far as in them is, would bring in al confusion and disorder, in altering and changing Gods owne course, to set vp and establish their owne vnbridled

led lust and lawles affection.

Hitherto we haue seen how farreforth the Scriptures, and places of the old Testament, doe stand firmly on our side, for the prooffe of this question, the which we haue taken vpon vs, namely that mariages are not to be made without the consent of parents, the which as we perswade our selues, wee haue proued with the aduantage, shewing that not onely children, in mariage ought to haue the goodwil & leave of their fathers & mothers, but also, if we shal look more neerlie into the cause, that the choise in mariage belong vnto them. Now in the tenth place I wil make this plaine also, by one cleare testimony and witness out of the newe Testament, the which I take from out of the seauenth Chapiter of the first Epistle of S. Paul vnto the Corinthians, whose wordes be these: *But if any man thinke that it is vncomly for his Virgin, if shee passe the flowre of her age, and neede so require, let him doe what he will, he sinneeth not, let them be married. Neuertheles he that standeth firme in his heart, that he hath no neede, but hath power ouer his owne will, and hath so decreede in his heart, that he wil keepe his Virgin, he doeth well. So then he that giueth her to mariage, doth wel, but he that giueth her not to mariage doth better.* The purpose of Paul in this place is to giue counsell vnto parentes, what course they were best to take for their children concerning their bestowing of them in mariage,

The tenth
reason out of
the words of
Paule. 1. Cor.
7. 36. 37. 38.

or letting them remaine single, according vnto the assured and certaine knowledge that they haue of their abilitie to liue chaste, or their neede, otherwise to vse that lawfull remedie, the which God hath ordained against fornication, which is to marie, so that those which haue the gift of chastitie, hee would not haue constrained to ioine themselues in wedlocke, nor those which are not able to be forced to liue single. This is brieflie the summe of the place. Concerning those children that cannot liue single, hee willeth their parentes to looke vnto them betimes, least that their too long differring and delaying the matter breed some inconuenience. And this is it that hee saith: *If any man thinke that it is vncomeley for his Virgine, if shee passe the flower of her age, and neede so require, let him doe what he will, he sinneth not: Let them marie.* Which last clause plainly teacheth, that looke what is saide of the daughter, is to be vnderstood also of the son: for one cannot be married alone. Speaking therefore in the plurall number, he meaneth as well the sonnes as the daughters, touching whom this is his counsaile: That parentes when their children come once to such yeares, that they are readie to marie, should in due time haue consideration hereof, not giuing occasion, by causing them stay too long, either to bee derided, or laughed to scorne as stale bachelers, or otherwise to bee suspected

The summe of the Apostle his counsaile vnto parentes in time to provide fit matches for their children.

suspected of bad husbandrie, or huswifrie,
 or of pride and disdainning all others, being so
 nice & coy, that they think none fine enough
 to match withal, or that there is in them some
 secrete & hidden vice or infirmitie the which
 maketh them vnfit for mariage, or otherwise
 of couetousnesse, because they are loth to de-
 part with mony towards their maintenance,
 protracting & delaying the time longer then
 the nature and disposition of their sonnes &
 daughters will beare, so that by their means
 being thus deferred and put off, when as they
 are not able any longer to forbear, their pa-
 rents neglecting to prouide that remedie for
 them the which God hath ordained, they
 burne in lust and commit follie. Their fa-
 thers and mothers therefore perceiuing that
 so it ought to be, that is, their children with-
 out feare of some inconuenience cannot tary
 any longer vnmarried, ought worthelie to
 haue this wise care for them, in time to pro-
 uide them of fit and honest matches. This
 then is the drift of this place, that parentes
 should by all gentle and faire meanes trie out
 and search the state and disposition of their
 children towards mariage when by reason of
 conuenient age they are fit for the same, and
 by conference and questioning with them,
 get from them howe they stand affected this
 way, and accordinglie as they shall haue sure
 notice how they are giuen, to suffer them ei-
 ther to remaine single, or els that they (as it

is their fatherlie dutie) doe prouide for them
godlie wiues and husbandes . Thus we see
how pregnant and plentifull a text this is to
teach that it lieth in the parents to make due
choise for their children in the case of matrimo-
nie: And because that small regard is had
hereof in many now adaies , héce it commeth
that some children giue themselues ouer vn-
to the lustes of the flesh, in cōmitting shame-
full & filthy fornicatiō: others, contrary vnto
the lawes both of God and nature, breake in-
to the duties of their fathers, and vnnatural-
lie, and not child-like, without the priuitie &
consent of their parentes make their owne
matches & the same for the most part so vn-
toward , that they bring the gray haire of
their parentes vnto their grieve and sorrowe
to the graue, and themselues besides wastfully
spending all that they haue , liue all their life
long in continuall and daillie home braules,
and household strifes and discordes.

You therefore that be fathers and mothers
I most earnestlie and hartilie exhort and be-
seech you for the loue of God and in the
tender bowels and mercie of Iesus Christ
our most gracious redeemer , that you will at
the length awake , and rouse vp your selues
out of this deadlie sleepe of carelesnesse,
wherewith you haue bene long oppressed,
making litle or none accountes at all of this
waightie and necessarie dutie of prouiding
vertuous wiues and husbandes for your

The inconue-
nience that
groweth by
this that pa-
rents followe
not Paule his
counsaile in
prouiding fit
matches for
their children

An exhortati-
on vnto al pa-
rents.

sonnes and daughters, delay the time hencefoorth no longer, put in diligent vre and practise this wholsome counsaile of the Apostle, lay off all rigorous austerenes and bitternes, and in the spirite of lenitie and mildenesse, question and confer, talke and reason with your sonnes and daughters, when they be come vnto ripe yeares, that you may learn how they are inclined concerning mariage, or sole life: and if it bee so that you thinke, that through bashfulnesse and shamesfastnesse they will not dare to deale plainlie with you, nor freelie to vnfolde their mindes vnto you as they would doe vnto some of their familiars, let it not grieue you to vse this wise policie to fish out their purpose by some of their friendes, vnto whome being great with them, they will not bee affraide to vtter the verie bottome of their heartes and inmost secretes. And when you shall haue found, that it is safest for your honor, and meetest for their present estate, that you prouide for the to marie, goe about the same in the feare of God accordinglie, with faithfull and earnest praier vnto God, after the example of the godly Steward of Abraham in the book of Genesis, that he wil both direct you in a vertuous and christian choise, and also incline and mooue the heartes of your children with all dutifull readines to stand vnto the same, And taking the matter in hand after this reueret & christian order, assure your selues that you haue

haue performed a good work, & sin not, for so Paule telleth you in plaine wordes, where he saith, *Let him doe what he will, he sinneth not.* and a litle after, *He that giueth her to marie,* (meaning when the father by good triall had found out that otherwise she canot liue chaste) *sinneth not.* For in speaking after this manner, he hath (no doubt) respect vnto that course, the which the Lord himselfe in his word hath set down, & the which also hath of the godlie bene practised euen from the beginning, as by many examples anon shall be shewed. There is therefore no danger of doing amisse, and of sinning, if that you behaue your selues after this sort in prouiding husbandes for your daughters, and in bestowing of your sonnes in honest wedlock. But rather on the contrary part you shal verie greatly transgresse and offend, if ye shall neglect and forslow your dutie in this behalfe.

And to all you that will bee counted godlie and dutifull children, let mee in all humble and louing manner make this earnest suite and waightie motion, that you likewise hereafter will with all reuerence and aduisednesse consider, what dutie you owe vnto God, whose order this is, that you shold be ruled by your parents in all thinges, vnto whom he hath giuen such high & foueraigne power and authoritie ouer you, that he will haue euen those solemn vowes and promises

An earnest
suite vnto all
godly childre

Do that

Nam. 30.

that you haue made vnto himselfe to stoupe
and giue place vnto their consent and allow-
ance : strīue no longer against God, but in
all willingnesse of minde put your neckes
vnder his yoke : enter not violentlie into
your fathers right : giue vnto them this ho-
nour, to thinke that they by their wisedome
can, and for the louing care the which they
beare towardses you, will prouide better for
you, then you can doe for your selues : re-
member that you are called after Christ by
the glorious name of Christians, who was
obedient vnto his father euen vnto the death
of the crosse, let it therefore be no grieffe vn-
to you to submit your selues vnto them in
that same thing, whereof you haue in the
scriptures so manie notable and honourable
presidentes : if they shall be thought slacke in
providing for them in due time, labour by all
modest meanes that by some friendes they be
put in mind of their duetie : since God hath
commanded them to make choise for you,
bestow not your selues without their consent
but humble your selues by deuout and faith-
full praiers before the throne of the almighty,
that he in mercie will vouchsafe that your na-
turall parentes vnto whose power you are
subiect, setting aside all carnall and earthly
respectes, may in their choise for you haue
his feare before their eies, and that your
selues may not bee caried away after your
owne fancies, but by the working of his
holy

holie spirite bee inwardlie and throughlie
mooued with a godlie, christian, and pure
loue to imbrace those which they shall haue
chosen and prouided for you, as the godlie
children in former ages haue done before
you.

And here I will alleadge, for an other rea-
son the generall vse and practise of the god-
lie Fathers, Patriarches and other holie men
in prouiding of wiues for their sonnes, and
husbandes for their daughters, together with
the willing obedience of their children to ac-
cept and take them so prouided, at their
handes, to serue to prooue that it was a
common lawe among those that liued in
those times: for the sonnes and daughters in
matrimonickall cases to be ordered and ruled
by their fathers and mothers. For the Law-
yers doe holde, that generall vse and custome
doe make a law. And what reason then is
there to the contrary, but that this, the which
hath so generallie and continuallie bene ob-
serued, should in like maner goe and be ta-
ken for a law, the which it may bee thought
that God euen hereby woulde induce and
leade men vnto, in that, when hee first crea-
ted all things, and man last of all, ouer whom
by the priuiledges of creation, he might wor-
thilie claime the right and power of a father,
he doth not suffer him at his owne choise &
pleasure to take vnto himselfe the woman,
made of his side, but brought her himselfe vn-

The eleuenth
reason from
the common
vse & practise
of the godlie
in former
times.

God as a father
prouideth a wife
for Adam in
Paradise.

A trifling cau-
ill.

to him to be his wife, by which his fact (as I doe take it) was notablie prefigured or foreshadowed out vnto vs, that he would haue earthly fathers take that course in prouiding for their children in mariage, the which he being our heauenlie father tooke for his eldest son Adam in paradise, that is, that they should make choise of wiues and husbandes for their sonnes and daughters, the which they ought as willinglie to receiue at the handes of their fathers, as Adam did his wife from the hand of God. If any of those vnbrideled colts, the which think they may at their owne pleasure make their own matches, shal for the defence and maintenance of their disorder, dealing in this behalfe replie and say, that this example taken from the fact of God, doth no more warrant this course, the which so much disliketh them, then it prooueth, that a father ought in like sort to take a wife for his sonne out of the rib of a man, and close vp the place againe with flesh, as God did in Adam: I answere that this is a friuolous or trifling cauill. For, as the making of Heuah of the rib of Adam, was inimitable, or vnfollowable, being a token of God his omnipotencie and almightie power: so the other, being such as both without danger we may follow, and also (as hath bene plentifulle before shewed) wee are commaunded to followe, and now remaineth to make plaine, that the godlie from time to time did follow, might

veris

verie well be a foretoken vnto vs, that God in the choise for our childre would haue that we should do the like.

And this seemeth yet further hereby to be confirmed, that when as our first parents through their disobedience and breach of God his commandement had worthelie deserued to bee turned headlong out of the earthlie paradise, and had further through this their trasgression, lost 'so farre' as in them lay the inheritance of the kingdome of heauen, both for themselues and also for all their posteritie, when as nowe there remained no other way of recouering the same againe, but onelie by the meanes of a mariage to be made by faith betweene himselfe and his posteritie, and our Lord and Sauour Iesus Christ, the true and euerlasting sonne of God: who knoweth not that this match before all times was concluded in the eternall and most wise counsaile of God the father, who gaue his onlie sonne Iesus Christ in time to bee borne of the virgin Marie, that he should not onlie be the spouse and husband of his Church, the members of his bodie, of his flesh, and of his bones, as the Apostle speaketh vnto the Ephesians, but also of his entire and tender loue vnto the same laid downe his life for it, that it being washed in his owne blood, wherwith it is all to be sprinkled by the hand of faith, it may bee presented as a pure virgin vnto his heauenlie father without spot or wrinkle.

God giueth
Christ his son
to be the hus-
band of his
Church.

Ephes. 5 34.

if therfore God the father made the choise of vs his church to be a wife for Iesus Christ his sonne, who with vnspeakable willingnesse tooke the same at his hand, although sinne greatlie blemished and deformed, which blemishes and deformities he couered notwithstanding by faith in his blood: Howe much more then ought earthlie fathers seeke out meet wiues & husbands for their sonnes and daughters, whose duties it is to accept & like of the after this sort prouided & chose for the

Peter Martyr
in his commentaries
vpon the booke of
Iudges.

But if any shal thinke these examples to be far fetcht (albeit they be vsed of men of great note in this selfe same verie argument) I will now come vnto other presidents, so manie as I can call to my remembrance, as I read them set downe in the booke of the scriptures.

Abraham by
his steward
prouideth a
wife for Isaac
his sonne.

Abraham being verie olde and stricken in yeares, intending to make choise of a wife for Isaac his sonne, who at this time was no child of himselfe, but fortie yeares of age, without imparting his counsaile vnto him, committeth this chardge vnto the Stewardest of his house, of whom he taketh an oth for his faithfull dealing in this businesse, whereas, had it either bene the custome of that time, or otherwise lawfull for children in these cases to haue chosen for themselues at their owne will and pleasure, it had bene most meete and conuenient that his father should haue dealt with Isaac his sonne, & not with his seruant concerning.

The seruant, as it may appeare by his proceedings, being wel acquainted with the practise of those daies, dealeth not at all with Rebekcha in these affaires, but goeth directly vnto her father Bethuell, at whose handes he doth obtaine her for his masters sonne. Bethuel the father, at the Steward his propounding his sute in the name of his master, by and by (as one not doubtfull of the obedience of his daughter) concludeth and shutteth vp the match, yet like a kinde father not minding to force his childe thereunto against her will, calleth for her, & asketh what she sayth therunto,, who like a most louing childe, doeth willingly consent vnto her his match, and taketh her iourney to goe with the seruant. Isaac, after that Rebecca is brought home vnto him, entreth not into the desperate vaine of the vnruely youths of our dayes, the which are caried away with the violent streame of their head-strong affections, & therefore they shame not to blunder out these or such like most vnreuerent and vnbesitting speeches: My father, shall my father prouide me my wyfe? is he to make my choise? I am to marie for my selfe, and not for my father, and therefore I wil be my owne chooser: Like she me, I seeke no further, dislike father or mother, or all the world besides, I weigh it not &c. you shall heare no such thing of Isaac. Nay he may worthely be a mirror or looking glasse for all sonnes to prie into, and to behold how farre they

The Steward
goeth vnto
the father of
Rebekcha.

Bethuel ma-
keth the
match for his
daughter.

Rebecca
standeth in
the choise of
her father.

Isaac taketh
Rebecca pro-
vided for
him, and lo-
ueth her.

Gen. 24. 67.

Isaac.

Gen. 28. 29.

Judah besto-
weth his sons
in mariage.
Gen. 38.

they come short from his submisſe and duti-
full obedience in this behalfe, for the wo-
man whom he neuer ſaw before, neither yet
heard of ſo far as we reade, when he once vn-
derſtandeth that ſhee is appointed for him
by the choiſe of his father, the next ſaith, hee
receiued her, and loued her, and was comfor-
ted after the death of his mother.

Isaac being hardly menaced and threate-
ned by his brother Eſau, in ſo much that hee
was couſailed by his mother to flie away, for
the ſafegarde of his life, is directed by his old
and blinde father Isaac, to goe to the houſe
of his brother Laban, and from thence to take
vnto his ſelf a wife, who obeying the voice of
his father, wēt vnto his vncle Labā, & frō his
hand receiueth his two wiſes Leah & Rachel.
Judah one of the xii. Patriarchis, beſtowed in
mariage his two ſons Er and Onan, and after
their death, putteth Tamar their widdowe in
good hope, that if ſhe wil tary vntil his thirde
ſonne Shelah, by reaſon of years ſhould be fit
in mariage to be ioind with her, that he ſhould
be a match and huſbād for her, in which pro-
miſe, albeit his purpoſe were indede to mock
her, in reſpect of his inward intent priuy onely
vnto himſelfe, yet Tamar in ſuch ſort taking
him, as that ſhe ſuppoſed his heart and tongue
to iumpe together, teacheth vs, that ſhe was ſo
far perſwaded of his fatherly authority to cō-
maund his ſon when he ſhould growe to age
conuenient, to be ruled by him, that without
ſeeking

seeking any further assurance, shee remaineth
 widdow, making her full and sure reckoning,
 that in the end she should inioy him, because
 his father, in whose authority hee was, to bee
 disposed, would in truth perform his promis.
 Caleb giueth his daughter Acsah, to be a wife
 vnto Othniel or Othoniel, who wā her by his
 valour and prowes, in taking by force of arms
 Kiriahtsepher, hauing made a general procla-
 mation, that whosoever could effect that no-
 ble peece of seruice, should obtaine her for
 his portion, whereby may easely be gathered,
 in what subiection children then were vnto
 their parents, in as much as it being a thinge
 very vncertaine, who should doe this warlike
 feat, yet whatsoeuer he were, whō God should
 enable thereunto, hee made no doubt of his
 daughters taking him to be her husband. Am-
 non burning in vnordinate lust towards Ta-
 mar the sister of his brother Absalon, when as
 he went about to defile her, being craftely be-
 trayed into his, handes, through the futtle
 counsaile of Ionadab his friend, requesting
 him to abstaine from offering vnto her that
 great reproche and villany, shee willeth him
 to aske her of her father in marriage. The
 marriage it selfe I condemne as vnlawfull
 and incestuous, yet her request importeth
 thus much, that shee well knewe, that
 shee was not to determine of her owne mar-
 riage, but that the right thereof belonged
 to her father. Sampson, although he faulted

Caleb dispo-
 seth of the
 mariage of
 his daughter
 Acsah.
 Ios. 15. 16. 17.

Tamar doeth
 acknowledg
 it to bee the
 right of her
 to determine
 of her maris-
 age.
 2. Sam. 13.

David.

Iudg. 14

in

Judge. 14

in falling in loue with a woman of the Philistins, yet the Scriptures mention, that he desired his parents to procure her for him to be his wife. Where I would haue it of all youths to be well noted, after what sort he sped, with this his match of his owne making. But what shall I neede to make any longer stay in bringing forth examples of the godlye to prooue this custome of fathers in prouidinge mariage for their children, when as we haue testimony of the practise of the same euen among the wicked, and that out of the Scriptures also. For Hagar albeit that shee her selfe sometimes had beene a stubborne and disobedient seruant vnto her mistres Sarah, yet when Ishmael her sonne was once grown to man his estate, shee prouideth and taketh a wife for him out of the land of Egypt. And we do not read the contrarie, but that hee willingly doth take her at his mothers choosing, albeit that otherwise he were a fierce and cruell man, whose handes was against euery man, and euery mans hand against him, Shechem the sonne of Hamor a Lord of the Hiuities, hauing defloured Dinah the daughter of Iacob, desireth his father to get her of Iacob to be his wife, which proueth that hee both thought, that she was not to bee placed in mariage, but by the appointment and allowance of her father, and that also he would not marrie her but by consent and procurement of his father Hamor. And it is more then proba-

Wicked parentes haue prouided mariages for their children and they haue dutifully admitted of their choise.

Gen. 27. Gen 24

Shechem,
Gen. 34.

probable or likely, that this custome of the parents choosing, and the childrens standing to their choise, was continued from that age, vpward vnto the latter times of the Poets, and Comedy and Tragedy writers, in the generation of the Heathen and vngodly, wher houthould discipline and gouernment, was not altogether shaken and decayed, in so much that the maid sayth in Euripides, when she was sued vnto for mariage: My father will haue care of my mariage, it is not in my part to determine these matters. And agreeably herunto reporteth Xenophon of king Cyrus, that being solicited and motioned vnto a great and honorable mariage, he answereth, that were her personage neuer so honorable and her dowrie to the purse neuer so profitable; he will not at any hand meddle in this matter, because that it was a thing beyonde his reach, and belonged altogether vnto the power and arbitrement of his parents. And this is a matter so common and wel knownen, that the very boyes in the Grammar schoole, are well acquainted therewithall out of the Comedies of Terence, and Plautus, who among the rest make this case most plaine, that it was an ordinarie course in their times, that the fathers made the matches for their sons and daughters in the way of mariage.

The maid in
Euripides.

K. Cyrus,

Hereunto agreeth all antiquity, together with the better sort of writers in all kinde of faculties, Diuines, Schoole men, Ciuilians,

Cano-

The twelfth reason from the consent of all ages, and the better sort of all kinde of writers.

Canonistes, Decrees, Counsailes, yea and some of the Popes themselues, who haue gone so far in these matters, that they doe strike with the fiery thunderbolt of excommunication, *ipso facto*, or so soone as the dede is done (as they say) not onely all those children the which without the consent of their parentes, make these secret contractes and priuie matches, but also all such as any way with their countenance, counsaile, assistance, presence, or any other meanes shall helpe, fauour, further or procure the same, yea some other of them (as the learned well knowe) do hold such kind of bargaines for no mariages, but pronounce them adulteries, fornicatiōs, and whordomes. The Ciuilians stande so stoutelie, and lustelye, to mainteine the parents authority & liberty in these cases, that this is set downe among the for a ruled case, (as Peter martyr reporteth) that if a woman haue once married with an husbände by the consent of her parentes, and afterwarde they fall at such iarre, that they bee diuorced, if shee bee by perswasion moued to bee reconciled vnto the same partie, and bee againe married vnto him, that this marriage being made without the consent and knowledge of her parentes, is altogether frustrate, and vnlawfull, nay if any children haue such parentes, as be taken with Phrensie or madnes, so that they cannot haue their consent in marriage, they will haue them

in such a case, to obtayn the consent of their ouerseeres and gouernours : so sincerely and soundlie , and agreable vnto the worde of God, doe the ciuill constitutions determine of the parentes right, in the placing and bestowing of their children in matrimonye and wedlocke.

And that it yet may be further apparent vnto al men, that I am not singular in mine own conceite, or wedded vnto any priuat iudgment in this argument, I will adde a few testimonies of the latter Diuines of our age, the which tell a round tale in this busines, and goe not behinde the doore for the matter at all, but deliuer theyr verdicts frankly and freely without all obscurity or darknes. And this I will the rather doe, that all parents and children, which are not vtterly voyd of al feeling, hauing of ignoraunce hitherto forflowed their duties on both sides in this respect, may henceforth, being compassed about with such a cloude of irrefragable or vngainsaible witnesses, which are aboue all exception against, bee touched with a due & christian sorowfulnes of conscience, the beginning of healthful repentance, so that they may think earnestly vpon the amendmēt of this gret fault, the one carefully prouiding christiā matches for their children in due time, & the other in al dutiful humility, framing theselues to accept of their choise, least that being pressed with such a heavy weight of so many

The plain and cleare iudgment of the best Diuines of our time, touching this matter,

graue

Rom. 2.15.16

graue authorities from the lawe of nature. God, and nations, there bee left no coloure of excuse vnto them in that most terrible and feareful day of reckoning, when the thoughts of our hartes shall either accuse vs, or excuse vs, when as the Lorde him selfe shall iudge of the secretes of men, according vnto the Gospell by Iesus Christ, so that it will be then in vaine for any to make the plea of ignorance, when as besides the testimonye of his owne conscience, he shall be conuincd by such a multitude of most forcible & mighty euidence, which at the barre will stand and plead against him. But to the witnesses of the new writers.

Caluyn 1.

Caluyn vpon the 3. verse of the 24. chapter of Genesis, among other thinges hath these wordes: Now this ensample ought to stand vs instead of a generall rule, that childré may not contract themselues in mariage, but by the arbitrement and appointment of their parentes. And truely this doth the equi-ty of nature teach vs, that children in a matter of such waight ought to rest vpon the will and pleasure of their parentes: by howe much the barbarousnesse of the Pope is the more to bee detested, which hath dared to breake in sunder this holie band, wherefore the wanton malepertnesse and saucinesse of youth is to bee restrained, that they rashly post not vnto mariage without the counsaile of their fathers,

And

And againe in another place speaking of Hagars prouiding a wife for her sonne Ishmaell: Whereas Hagar is said (saith Caluin) to haue taken a wife for her sonne, this appertaineth vnto politike or ciuill gouernment. Gen. 21. verse. 27. For when as mariage is an especiall part of the life of man, it is meete that in making of the same, children should be ruled by their parentes, and followe their aduise in this behalfe. This order, the which nature prescribeth and teacheth, we see to haue bene kept of Ishmaell a wild man in the barbarousnesse of the wildernesse, that in the marieng of a wife he was obediēt vnto his mother. Whereof we doe perceiue how cruell a monster the Pope hath bene, in that he hath aduentured to breake this holy lawe of nature. Furthermore his shamelesnesse was added hereunto, in that he hath vaunted that he giueth a priuiledge vnto the vngodlie contempt of parentes, for the honour of holie wedlocke.

Musculus vpon the same place writeth thus: Behold the honestie of those times. In our daies there is no need for parents to prouide their sonnes of wiues, when as youthes is suffered by a moit bad custome, to take vnto themselues wiues without the priuittie of their parentes, and such mariages are confirmed in the Popes consistories, as they tearme them. And a litle afterward: They that marie without the knowledge of their fathers and mothers, doe sinne

Musculus against stolen mariages.

Let al youths
diligently
marke these
thinges;

1 Against the first ordinance of mariage. Loke before Cap. 2. Gen. vpon these wordes, *And hee brought her vnto Adam.*

2 Against the commandement of God: Honor thy father and thy mother.

3 Against the law of nature, which is this: Do not vnto another that thing, the which thou wouldest not haue to be done vnto thy selfe.

4 Against publike honesty, & good manners.

5 Against the ciuill laws, the which do condemne priuy and stolen mariages.

6 Against the holynes of wedlocke, the beginnings wherof are by this meanes defiled.

7 Against the examples of our elders. Here in this Chapter. Afterwards chap. 28. *And albeit Iacob loued Rachel, yet did hee not priuily steal her away, but serued for her at the pleasure of her father, vntill that he might receiue her at his handes being lawfully deliuered.*

8 Against youth it self, the which through this rashnes doth very greatly hinder & hurt it self. That priuy & stolen mariages are void and of no effect, if the father giue not his consent.

EXod 22. *Although a maiden be intised, yet shall she not be married vnto him that intised her, if her father be vnwilling thereunto.*

And Sichein the Prince of Salem, did not thinke that he should obtaine the mariage of Dinah in spite of the teeth, or against the will of her parents, hereafter. Cap. 74.

And because that Musculus doth refer the Reader, vnto that which he hath further written vpon these words of Genesis, concerning

this matter. *And he brought her vnto him. &c.* Because that this booke is in latine as the rest of his workes, for the most part are, and for that euery one vnderstandeth not this tongue, it shall not grieue me in this consideration for the better satisfiing of the godly Reader to turne that place vnto Englishe, where he writeth after this manner.

Here is to be noted, that God not only created the woman, but also brought her vnto Adā to espouse and betroth her vnto him, and deliuered her & ioyned her vnto him for his wife. She was made not onely of the flesh and bones of Adā but also concerning kind, like vnto him in al thingss, as well as one beast is like vnto another beast of his kinde. Adam mought haue found her out without any great pain, & whē he had found her, because of her conformity or likenes vnto him, though differing indeede in sexe, yet acknowledge her agreeable vnto him in all other points, ioyn her vnto him, & vse her for the increasing of mankinde, like as wee see this to haue bene done by the beasts, vnto none of the which we doe read, that this femal was broght seuerally. But god would not that either Adā, or the womā should do any of these things, vpon their own heads. Wherefore he himselfe ioyned them together, & brought the woman vnto Adam, deliuered and betrothed her being formed, & made for lawful companie sake. We are admonished by this consideration, what lawe-

That God himselfe bringeth the womā vnto the man, betrotheth her, & ioineth her in marriage vnto him.

God supplied
the part of al-
ders and pa-
rents, when
as he ioined
Euah vnto
Adam.

Which no
wife stealer
can doe,

full mariage doth require, namelie that the male and female or man and woman doe not ioine themselues together vpon their owne rashnesse & lust, but that they must be lawfullie ioined together according vnto the ordinance of God by the aduise and will of their parentes and elders, whose partes in the ioining together of Adam & Euah God took vpon himselfe. Such as are in this sort ioined are ioined by God himselfe, whose part and office the parentes and elders do rightlie and lawfullie supplie, after the first ordinance of mariage vnder whose power and authoritie those that be ioined are. And in such mariage that saying of Christ hath place. *Whom God hath ioyned together, let no man put a sunder.* Those that are ioined together by bad practises, by the wicked prouocation of lust, in respect of wealth, & so forth, without the ordinance of God cannot glorie of lawfull ioining together. It is further required, that we be not ioined after the maner of beastes, as she by and by bee mine, which hauing the shape of a woman pleaseth my lust: but that I take her to wife, the which is brought vnto me and deliuered by the Lord, & that I may say of her: The woman which thou gauest me ô God, as in Chapter following we reade to haue bene done by Adam. Therefore against this order are fornicators, whose maisters, keepers of Concubines, and as many as cannot with a good conscience glorie, that they haue

haue their wiues lawfullie gotten.

Peter Martyr in his commentarie vpon Genesis, speaking of the betrothing and making sure of Rebekkah vnto Isaac, writeth thus of the solemnities of that mariage: The ornamentes of this mariage were prayers, thanksgiuing, hospitalitie, the consent of the maiden. For she is not constrained, as it is often done by vngodlie parentes, who sometimes violentlie force husbandes vpon their daughters, or that which is worse, doe thrust them into Monasteries or Abbeies. Nay aboue all thinges the consent of the parentes doth here step in betweene, whose office it is to bestow their sonnes or daughters in mariage, neither is it their parts rashlie to choose vnto themselues wiues &c. For I cite him the more sparinglie, because he hath written a learned common place of this argument, the which, although it be in english, yet because (so far as I know) it is not to be had seuerallie, but among the rest of his common places, being a booke of too great a price for the poorer sort, I haue bene the rather induced and moued to labour also in this question, and that (as I trust) not without some profite vnto the godlie disposed, the which shall vouchsafe to read the same.

Marlorat after he had said somewhat concerning the choise of a wife, the which Hagar made for her sonne, at the last inferreth thus: Wherefore this youth (speaking of Ishmaell) being

Peter Martyr
vpon Genesis
Cap. 24. ver. 1
58.

being a man growen marrieth a wife, but not but by the counsaile & authoritie of his mother, and within a litle space after: What then ought the children of the faithfull to perform vnto their parents? Doth it not beseme and become them in making of mariage, to be led by the power and authority of their parents, that they giue not ouer themselues vnto their owne lustes.

5
Ferus a popish
friar.

To like purpose hath Ferus a Popish friar, noted vpon Abraham his pronouncing of a wife for Isaac by his Steward. These be his wordes: Note and marke, that Isaac seeketh not a wife, but Abraham prouideth him of a wife. For this is the duty of parents, and belongeth not properly vnto the sonnes, whose part it is to obey.

6
Borrihaus.

Borrihaus vpon the 22. of Exodus ver. 17 *If the father of the maiden refuset to giue her.* A place for the power of parentes ouer their children in making of mariages, that they mariages do consist in the arbitremēt of their parentes. Which thing Orestes in Euripides alloweth sayng: And I will praise mariage, when as my father shal giue vnto me a wife.

7
Bullinger.
R. Cor. 7. 36.

Bullinger expounding these wordes of S. Paul in his Epistle vnto the Corinthians: *But if he thinke it vnseemely for his Virgin &c.* writeth on this sort: Hee declareth by examples that, which hee hath saide already, that there should be no darknes in his words. And we may expound that word Virgin as wel for the

the person, as for the thing it selfe, namely virginity. The meaning is this, if a man haue a virgin marriable, and nowe ready for a husband (for this I vnderstand by that which hee sayeth, if shee passe the time of mariage, the which Ambrose translateth, if she be past ripenes of age) and hath a desire to mary (that is it which he saith, and so it ought to be) so that her father is to feare, least that secretly she go about, or enterprise some thing that is not comely, vnles shee be prouided for by mariage, now the father sinneth not, if hee bestow her forth vpon an husband, &c. And afterwards: we learne by this discourse that it is the dutie of parents, to giue their daughters in mariage. For among them of old times, the contract of matrimony was not of any force, without the authority of the parents. Whereunto that in the law of God semeth to appertayn, the which is commaunded vnto the Iewes, that they should not giue their daughters or theyr sonnes vnto the Heathen in mariage: the which should haue bin in vaine, if the children had bene at theyr owne liberty, and did not rather depend vpon the authority of their parents: yet this also must be added, that it is the part of parents in time conuenient to take order and prouide for their children, and that they compell them not either to virginity or single life, or vnto mariage.

Gualter is iust of the same iudgement vpon the very same place, whose words are: But

Mariage contractes void, without the consent of parentes.

8

Gualter,

Num. 30.

here with all, sonnes and daughters must mark that by this place the power of parentes ouer their childré is established, the which as it is great in other maters, so here in especial hath it soueraigne authoritie, wheras the question is concerning mariage. For if they must prouide for their children, in like maner it is their part to obey them, least that by their lust and head-strong boldnesse they doe preuent the aduise and pleasure of their parentes. For alwaies ought the lawe of God to beare sway with them, in the which they are commanded to haue their parentes in price and honour. And how great their authority is ouer their sonnes and daughters it is manifest euen by this, that their parentes may disanull and breake the vowes which their children haue made without their knowledge and priuie. When as therefore G O D himselfe vouchsafeth to yeelde of his owne right, (that I may so speake) and will not haue that ratified and stand, the which is promised vnto himselfe, if the parentes determine otherwise, they doubtlesse are to be thought to bee too rash and wicked, who will not submit their youthfull desires vnto the ordering and disposing of their parentes. Neither may this goe for currant, that any should pretend age for his excuse. For there is no age the which ought to breake the authoritie of parentes established by the lawes of nature. And Paule in this place speaketh of virgins

virgins, the which haue now alreadye passed the flower of their age, and mariage yeares, and neuerthelesse subiecteth them also vnto the gouernment of their parents, when as he teacheth, not what they ought to doe, but what their parents ought to dispose of them. The ciuill lawes. This in times past did the makers of the ciuill lawes deserue, the which wold haue those mariages to be void, the which are made without the aduise and consent of parents, vnlesse some waightie case doe will them to be ratified and stand in force.

Agreeable vnto this also doeth Hemingius. Hemingius. us set downe his iudgement vpon this place but in fewer wordes thus : Now he turneth his speach vnto parentes hauing daughters of growen yeares, vnto whom he giueth authoritie to bestowe their daughters in mariage if they will. But that which he putteth in betweene (and so it ought to be) is a restraint, and it is to be vnderstood thus: If the maiden be without the gift of chastitie it ought so to be; namelie that she be giuen to be married, to auoid fornication. On the other side if a virgine haue the gift of chastitie, it is left free vnto the parentes to marie them, and not to marie them. From hence let parents learne, that it is not lawfull for them, to lay vpon their children a perpetual law of chastitie, vnlesse they be first sure that they haue the gift of chastitie, the which verie seldome falleth out, vnles by some griefe or defect and want

iii

Beza de repus
diis & diuor-
tis.

in nature.

Beza in this case is so sure on our side, that he holdeth not onely the stolen contracts to be void and vnlawfull, but also the mariage it selfe that followeth after the same to be of no force and vnlawfull. But it is best to heare him tell his owne tale himselfe. But what (saith hee) if mariage in deede haue followed after such cōtracts? Doubtles if the cause be considered why such contracts are vtterly void (because he namlie cānot consent to the bestowing of himselfe, the which is not in his owne power) it wil follow that the mariage it selfe ought much lesse to bee of force, as verely wherein there is required a more expresse and sure consent.

Aretius

And Aretius in his common place of mariage among other things that make the same vnlawfull rekoneth vp the contracting of the same without the consent of parentes. His wordes be these: That mariage is vnlawful, the which is against the commandement and lawe of God. And this faulteth either in the degrees forbidden: or else because it is made vp with priuie and stolen contractes against the will of the parentes: or els when as manie wiues are admitted or taken at one time.

luther.

But we will conclude & shut vp this point with the testimonie of M. Luther, the thunderbolt of Germanie, whome wee haue reserved vnto this last place. not for that hee

is

is the least among my witnesses, who worthilie ought to be accompted offeuen with the verie foremost for his most profitable seruice done vnto the Church of GOD, but because hee doeth verie euidentlie and clearelie with great courage and boldnesse of heart set downe his iudgement in this cause writing vpon the 24. Chapter of the booke of Genesis: Therefore (saith hee) doe I handle this place, albeit odious or hatefull: Because Isaac doeth not marie a wife, where hee pleaseth, but is forbidden of his father to marie one of the land of Canaan, and his father himselfe doeth carefullie provide his sonne of a wife, and his sonne with all willingnesse doeth obey his father. For dailie experience doeth teach, that those priuie and stolen contractes are the cause of great mischiefes, daylie braules, strifes, perjuries, and murthers, and also the most shamefull plague and garboile of the Church and cōmon wealth. So the popish Canonists do nothing els but seek to teare in sunder the Church and trouble the world because of their doltish & vnlearned Cannons. And shall wee suffer them to bring in so many mischiefes into our Churches? Let the Deuill winke at this, and no other man: nay rather I my selfe will excommunicate all those doctors, then that we will tolerate and beare in our Churches their wicked and vngodlie sentences & iudgement.

The mischiefs
the which do
growe of priuie
contracts.

And

When parents
do abuse their
authoritie.

The common
practice a-
mongst vs at
his daie.

And some pretty space after, he hath these wordes: The doctrine therefore of this place is, that parentes ought to provide their sons and daughters of honest mariage: Although this be not to be let passe, that it often times falleth out in mans life, that the parentes do sometimes abuse their power and authoritie, and will compel their children to marie with those, whom they loue not, the which cometh often to passe in the great families of noble men. They are to be found fault withall, because they carie no sparke of a fatherlie mind & affection, but are blockes & stockes, they haue not that same natural loue towards their children. In such a case let the Pastor of the Church, or the ciuill magistrate set in their authoritie Because that this is not a fatherlie power, but a tyrannie. Wee therefore do so diligentlie vrge the authoritie of parents, first because of the commandement & ordinance of God, the examples of the scriptures, and the ciuill lawes. Secondlie because of that notable wickednes being vnto al godlie and honest parentes verie grieuous, the which hath raunged in the world in all ages: namelie that when as they haue brought vp their children godly and honestlie, that they might be heires of their fathers goodes, after wardes there haue bene some found, they not knowing of it and against their willes, the which by disceit and subtilty haue ouer-recht and compassed the maidens and honest yong men

men, that they shoulde by stealth marie with those, the which were both of small honestie and also vnfit for them, and vnto their parents most vnwelcome.

The Pope hath set open a window and a broad gate vnto these horrible offences, and hath made away for baudes, that they might steale away mens sonnes and daughters for me, for thee, for euerie one of vs. Shall wee thinke these thinges to bee suffered, or defended? But they say that men must looke diligentlie vnto the keeping of their children, & haue an especiall care of them: But how can this be in so great wickednes and vntowardnes of men? Howe easilie are the plaine and simple meaning mindes corrupted, and beguiled?

Let parents therfore remember that power and authoritie is giuen them from God to bestow their children in mariage: and that contractes made without their consent are not good, neither by the lawe of God nor man.

Furthermore let children knowe that they are to aske their aduise and to knowe their pleasure. Let not a yoong man, whose age is fit for mariage, be afraid to open his mind vnto his parents: that he is in loue with an honest maiden, and desire, that they will geue her him to wife. For albeit this seeme to be a token of lust scarce comelie, yet let them know that God his mercy doth couer the same in mariage,

The Pope giueth leaue to steale away children from their parents.

Contractes void without the consent of parents.

A graue counsell vnto all honest youth

God doth couer & beautify
lust with
nest mari-
age.

mariage, & hath giuen a remedie for this disease. Let them therefore humble theselues before their parentes, and plainelie and free-lie say vnto them: my deare father, my good mother, giue me such a yoong man, or such a maiden, whome I loue. And if she be worthy to be matched with thee, or worthie of thine affinitie, or thy parentes, thine honest parentes will not denie thee, albeit the dowrie or wealth bee not answerable. Such mariages cannot choose but bee happie and prosperous, and God of his infinite goodnesse dooth blesse, pardon, and couer the heat of lust as it were with the couer of mariage. Yea, moreouer the holie scripture dooth allowe, and alleadge for example the loue and speach of the bridegroom and bride. Thus God pardoneth the filthinesse, and miserable lust, wherein wee are borne, and that which more is, dooth beautifie and honest the same with lawfull mariage. But let yoong men take heede and beware of this vsuall stubbornnesse and contempt of parentes, wherewithall some run starke mad, & of a blind rage do contract vn timerly mariages, vnfitting both themselues & also their elders & paréts. For in this place the holy scripture setteth forth a cōtrarie example, and far more honest, to be followed, when as Isaac marieth Rebekkah, according vnto the minde, will and counsaile, of his father.

These things thus considered, and this matter so generallie agreed vpon, and confirmed also by the approbation and consent of so manie graue, godlie, and learned witnesses, if henceforward the paréts shal either of negligence or sluggishnesse leaue of their dutie in prouiding of honest matches for their children, or their sonnes and daughters contemptuousslie and stubbornlie refuse to stand vnto their godlie and christian choise, ignorance will no longer serue to excuse the fault on either side, but that it must needs follow, that the seruant that knoweth his masters wil, and dooth it not, the same shall bee beaten with many stripes. Let fathers therefore on whom the charge by God his commandmēt lieth to take wiues for their sons, and to provide husbandes for their daughters, take diligēt heed herunto, that they abuse not this their power and authoritie ouer their children, but as in other cases, they are willed by the Apostle that they deal not in such sort towards them, that they hereby bee dismaied and discouraged, so especiallie in this matter of greatest moment and valour of all other worldelie things whatsoever, let them abstaine from all rigour and roughnesse, and beware that they turne not their fatherlie iurisdiction and gouernment into a tyrannicall sowernesse and waywardnesse, letting their will goe for a lawe and their pleasure for a reason, according vnto that olde, but

A necessarie
aduise vnto
parentes.

Colos. 3. 21.

Tellie in the
second book
of office,

but both Tiger and Tirant lyke saying: Looke what I commaund, that will I haue, my wil standeth for a reason. For the rule of the parentes ouer theyr children, ought to resemble the gouernment of good princes towards their subiects, that is to say, it must be milde, gentle, and easie to be borne, for as they, so like wise parents so far as concerneth them and lieth in theyr abilitie to performe, they must carrie such an euen and vpright hand in their gouernement, that they may by loue seeke to win the hartes of those ouer whome they are set, to bee firme and sure towards them, and not to keepe them vnder awe and subiection by feare. For, whom men feare, they hate, and him whom they hate, his death they wishe. I speake of seruile or slauiſhe feare, not of that child-like and reuerent feare, the which both the subiects owe vnto their Princes, and the children vnto their parents, and the which both the one and the other easilie obtaine at the handes of such as are vnder their gouernment, by their equal, vpright and moderate behauiour towards them.

Parēts ought
to deale sin-
cere ly in the
choise for
their children

It doth therefore stand parentes greatly in hand, that in making choise for their children they be free from all sinister and corrupt affection, and that for lucre & couetousnes they seeke not to thrust such matches vpon their children, as they cannot brooke, nor like well off: for nowadaies in the choise that a great manie parentes make of husbandes for their
daugh

daughters, and wiues for their sonnes, *Et genus & formam Regina pecunia donat*: that is, if they bee ritch inough, they be both faire, wel fauoured, yea and also godlie and vertuous inough: they being farre swarued from the mind & iudgement of that father, who once said concerning the mariage of his daughter, that he had rather haue a man without money, then money without a man: signifieng hereby that he rather respected the good qualities and vertues of his minde, then the great wealth and ritches of his cofers. Fathers therefore as they are by good right to choose, so ought they not in truth to constraîne & compel. For of al other matters, the consent of the children in mariage ought to be most free, so that in these cases, after all honest and lawful perswasions vsed, looke in what partie the fault may be worthelie thought to rest, there the godly magistrate ought to put in his foot, who in some respectes is not onelie in the scriptures comprehended vnder the name of a father, but also by his soueraigne aūthoritie wherewithall hee is armed from God himselfe, is to rule both the father and all his children, and all other, that doe belong vnto him. I am not able, neither is it my purpose to reckon all the colourable pretenses that fathers which are worldlie minded can alleadge to enforce vpon their children what yokefellowes soeuer they haue procured and prouided for them, so that they bee rich
F enough

The godlie
magistrate.

inough : neither yet is it possible for mee to set down all the shiftes, that children haue to shake off the yoke of due obedience in their fathers honest and lawfull choises. This therefore in all humilitie, euen in the bowels of Iesus Christ I request at the handes of them both, that they seeke not how to be wise and wittie (or rather in deed) willic how to deuise windleses and starting holes to shrowde and hide themselues in, when they should perfourme their duties on either part in this behalfe.

The plea of
some childre
for the making
of their
own matches.

Thereply.

The childrea can say for themselves, we are olde enough, and therefore able enough to make our own choise: we see it to be daily practised by others, yea and peraduenture we doe know (as hauing hard our parents sometimes in their merrimentes to bragge of the same) our fathers haue matched without the consent of their parentes, and haue all this notwithstanding done well ynough, and liued verie well : why therefore shoulde wee also doo the like? The question here is not, what children in regarde either of age or wit are able for to doo but what God hath thought meet & exped. et, nay, straightlie charged and commanded that they should doe. For there are many children found sometimes far to exceede their fathers in wit and in wisdom, yea and in al other gifes both of mind & body, yet is this no good reason that they should take vpon them their fathers au-

thority

thoritie. The wife may not therefore be a mai-
ster, because she hath more knowledge some-
times then her husband, but she must obey, &
the husbande is to rule, because that God
hath willed that it should bee so. And albeit
that matches made without the consent of
parentes haue often good successe, accor-
ding vnto the things which fall out outward-
lie in this life, yet that is not to bee imputed
vnto this disordered and vnnaturall course,
but vnto God his mercie that alwaies dooth
better for vs, then wee haue deserued. And
whereas it is said, that our parents haue mat-
ched without the choise & cōsent of their pa-
rents, therefore we also wil choose for ourselues
according vnto our owne liking, besides that
the breach of dutie in the father doth not ex-
cuse the like disobedience in his sonne: what
art thou that thinkest it not inough that thou
goe vnto the Deuill thy selfe vnlesse thou
haue thy father to go with thee also for com-
panie? For as thy sin of disobedience, if God
graunt thee not repentance of the same, shall
in his iustice presse thee down euen vnto hel.
So likewise sha'l thy fathers marieng without
the allowance of his parents, be sufficient to
condemne him, if together with the rest of his
sinnes it bee not couered in the merites of
Iesus Christ our Sauour. And the example
of Iudah may fitlie serue to instruct thee
in this point, that though thy father haue
married without the choise of his friends,

A bad sonne,
that wil haue
his father go
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Gen. 38.

yet thou art not in like maner to marie without the cōsent of them, for albeit Iudah tooke vnto himselfe a Cananitish woman without the priuitie and liking of his father Iacob, yet did hee prouide a wife for his owne children Er, and Onan, whereby wee gather that the fault, the which hee committed in himselfe, hee did not like nor allow of in his sonnes.

A profitable
counsaile for
all good na-
tured children.

Setting a side therefore all cunning glosses and colourable deuises hammered in the Deuill his forge, whereby hee teacheth his schollers to be subtil in inuventing reasons to maintaine their stubborne disobedience in not being ruled by the graue aduise & godlie counsaile of their parentes as touching their mariage matches, let all dutifull and good natured children in the reuerence and feare of God consider what honour and obedience they doe owe vnto their parents and what power and authoritie he hath in his worde sanctified vnto the ouer their children in the Lord, in regard hereof let them yeeld, vnto them this dutie, that their fathers hauing prouided for them such as are not of a wicked life, nor deformed or euill fauoured, nor of a contrarie religion, they willingly submit themselues vnto their choise, which if for the present, or vpon the suddain they canot yeeld vnto, let them by earnest calling vpon the name of God desire him to subdue in them this corrupt affection & that he

will

will frame their wil to bee plyable vnto their fathers in such lawfull cases: lawfull I may well call them, because that the ciuill constitutions and ordinances do ratifie and allow of them: the two former especiallie, setting downe that children are to giue the consent vnto the fathers choise, where the partie chosen is not of infamous life, nor in shape or fauour so blemished, as it may worthelie bee supposed that the same may be an occasion of the withdrawing of loue. As for the third caution, or promise of not grating vnto the fathers choise in the cause of contrarie religion, it is confirmed flatlie by the counsell of the Apostle, where he willeth that we should not draw the yoke with infidels, which if it hold in other cases of the affaires of this life, much more ought it to bee of force in mariage matters, mariage (I meane) hereafter to bee made and not such as are already made, for where the knot is once already knit, there disparitie, or vnequalnes in religion is no iust cause of seperation.

2 Cor. 6. 14:

Yea & in this most graue & waighty cause, I would be author vnto all christian parentes that they take not the same lightly in hand as if it were but a toy, or a iest, but that they begin it with praier that in the whole actiō they may in such sort be directed, that they do nothing against the word of God, or vnbecoming the same authority, the which God himself in this cause hath imposed or laid vpon them. And

In providing
of matches
for their chil-
dren, parentes
ought to be-
gin with prai-
er.

thus doing, God no doubt will ad a blessing vnto their godlie indeuour and holie care, & worke obedience in the heartes of their children, as hee framed the heart of Isaac with entire affection to imbrace Rebecca, whom his father Abraham had by his Steward provided for him. And least that any should imagine that this counsell is a peeuishe fancie of a too much spiced and nice conscience, the parents ought to bee induced and perswaded hereunto, first by the example of Abraham, who committing the charge of providing a wife for his sonne vnto his seruant, praith that God will send his Angell before him to direct him in this businesse.

Gen. 24. 7.
Aben Ezra
holdeth this
to haue bene
a praier.

Gen. 24. 12.
Gen. 24. 36.

Gen. 24. 53.

Secondlie the course which Abraham his seruant taketh in the effecting of this charge dooth teach no lesse, of whom we reade, that he entred into this businesse with praier: that he geueth thanks vnto God, when hee meeteth with Rebecca: that hee praiseth God when at the deliuerie of his message, the parentes without gaine-saieng graunted their consent.

Children marriageable are to pray vnto God to direct their parentes in a godly choise, and to incline their mindes to accept of the same.

And whilest I giue this counsell vnto the parentes, I woulde not haue the children thinke that I discharge them of this dutie, of whom the same is by so much the more to be put in practise, by how much they are more subiect to bee caried away with the swift current of their stay-lesse affections, from whome wee heare too often these and such

like

like more then prophane and heathenish
 speaches: *I will marie to please mine owne
 eie, and not to satisfie the mind of my father: I
 will neuer match with him that woeth my pa-
 rents before he woeth me. Shal I go to the father
 before I am sure of the daughter. &c.* Where-
 as in verie deede they are not at all once so
 much as to make the least motion of mariage
 vnto the daughter, vnlesse before they haue
 obtained the good will and liking of the fa-
 ther. For in these cases let the daughters, if
 they shall be thereunto sollicitated and woed,
 learne of the example of the maiden out of
 the Poet, and of Cyrus out of Xenophon ci-
 ted before, to say vnto their suters: My Fa-
 ther and my mother haue to determine and
 dispose of my mariage, this is a matter not be-
 longing nor appertaining vnto me. The hea-
 then haue borne themselues in this dutifull
 sort towards their parentes, and shall I that
 professe my selfe a christian come so far short
 of the in this dutie, as to cōtract my self with-
 out the consent & knowledge of my elders?
 Nay let the say with Tamar, as it is in the sto-
 ry of the kings: *Speake I pray thee vnto my fa-
 ther, for he will not deny me vnto thee. &c.*

2 Sam. 13
 verse. 13

And here, when as I enter into the conside-
 ration of the contrarie bad course & practise
 of the world, in intising of mens sonnes and
 daughters vnto mariage without, nay against
 the consent and will of their parents, it ma-
 keth me astonished and amazed, to heare that

Against inti-
 sing of childre
 vnto mariage
 without the
 consent of pa-
 rentes.

a great manie, and the same otherwise verie
 ciuill and honest, are to be found almost in all
 places, the which not onelie doe not dislike
 of this shamefull disorder, but holde it as it
 were but a sport and a play, yea that which
 more is, goe about to countenance and defend
 this notorious kind of shamelesse theeuerie,
 (for so I will not feare to call it) the which al-
 so doth farre better deserue to bee punished
 with death, then a great manie crimes that are
 punished with the same. Yea thou thy selfe
 which likest hereof wel enough & too well, if
 a theefe take but xx. shillings fro thee by the
 highway side, thou wilt hang him, if thou can:
 & art thou so bad an esteemer of thinges, that
 thou doest value the stealing away of a mans
 childe at a lesse rate, then the taking away of
 his mony? Wilt thou condemn him that stea-
 leth away thy beast, and iustify him that rob-
 beth thee of thy daughter? The law of God ap-
 pointeth death vnto such as steale mens chil-
 dre & sel the into slavery of the bodie, & what
 the thinkest thou is their offence which steale
 mens daughters against the consent of their pa-
 rents, to liue all their life time in whordome
 & adulterie, which is a spirituall slavery and
 bondage of the soule, by which without re-
 pentance it perisheth euerlastingly, whereas
 the bodily bondage nothing preiudicateth or
 hindereth the libertie of the soule, but that it
 notwithstanding may bee a free man vnto
 Christ? If theft by the consent, and iudgement
 of

Deut. 24. 7.

of all the learned be truly defined, and said, to be the taking away and withholding of another man his goodes, against the will of the owner of the same: and children, as hath bin before proued, be by good right to be rekened especially among the substance of theyr parentes: how then, is it not theft to steale away mens childré by intising them vnto marriage? And this argueth a great prophanenes of our time, and a wonderfull growth, and increase of sinne vnto his highest toppe, that whereas all other theeues for the moste part either steale in the night, or else disguised and vizarded in the day time, keeping themselves secret and hidden least being taken, they stretch a rope for their labour: the stealers of our daughters sometimes will not sticke to tell vs to our faces, that if they cannot obtaine them with our good will, they will if they can by any means, one day enioy them in despite of our teeth. And when they haue once atchieued their deuillish purpose, and offered villany vnto our children, in defiling of their bodies, they do not as other theeues, keepe themselves aloofe and creepe into corners, but offer themselves willingly inough to be knowne, making within themselves this reckoning, and sometimes openly vaunting hereof among their friendes, that hauing thus dishonested our children, we shal in the end be glad to make sute vnto them to keepe them, for feare least like vnto graceles Amnon,

Shameles
boldnes.

2 Sam. 13, 35.

Amnon, they should turne them thus abused, home againe vnto vs. This is the daily practise, and yet who almost is sory for the same? But if there bee no man nor woman to bee found, hauing any sparke of conscience left vnquenched, but confesseth, that hee would not haue his own sonne and daughter intised after this manner, let vs not then any longer goe about to vpholde, that done vnto others, the which we would dissalow and greatly mislike being done vnto our selues, and in our owne cases For this rule shall otherwise, remaine still in force inough against vs: Doe not vnto another, that which thou wouldest be loth should be done vnto thy selfe.

An obiection
of maid-stealers.

Answer.

But it may be aunswered hereunto, not by the Sheepe-stealers, but by the maide-stealers, that they haue the consent and goodwill of the maiden, and that peraduenture so far forth, that she hath in most earnest maner, yea euen with teares, and for all the loue sake that euer was betweene them, made request and sute vnto them to carie and conueigh her away, and by some secret meanes to bee married vnto them &c. This is indeede a verie plausible couloure, and such as carrieth a greate shewe of reason among many, but is in trueth the very worst plea that they could possibly haue made for themselves of all others. For doe they not see, how by this meanes they doe not alone quite cast and cleane ouerthrowe themselves, but
also

also accuse and condemne the party, whom they haue after this sort seduced and intiled? For besides theyr owne fault in going about this matter without the consent of their parentes, (the which as hath bene shewed sufficiently already, they ought like good children to haue taried for) they haue caused the maiden also, to cast off and breake in sunder the coardes of due obedience vnto her father or mother, which greate contempt, the Lorde wil not suffer vnreuenged. And because that such maner of cōtracts are altogether by God his word vnlawful, therefore in carnaly knowing the one the other (the which for the moste parte is the best end of these bad compactes) they haue committed fornication, heaping as it were drunkenesse vnto thirste, that is to say, committing one sinne in the necke of another, the which may not hereby be excused, for that they haue plighted and vowed their fayth and troth the one vnto the other, and therefore they cannot in conscience forsake one another. For it must first be considered, whether theyr vow and promise bee lawfull or no, before they enter into a setled determination, to performe and keepe the same. For where the vowe is vnlawfull, there can be no breach of conscience in obseruing and fulfilling the same. And as in all other cases, and actions of ours, the worde of GOD muste bee our warrant, to trye the lawfulness, or vnlawfulness,

That the vow
& promise the
which childre
make to mary
the one vnto
the other,
without the
consent of the
parents is no
matter of con
science, and
may lawfullie
be broken,

of the same, so also in this most chiefly, when wee vowe or promise by giuing our sayth, to doe any thing in his name. For nothing can please God, the which is not agreeable vnto his will, and we haue no other certificate left vs to assure vs of his will, but onely his worde. Wherefore whatsoeuer cannot be warranted by the same, is not agreeable vnto his wil, and so consequently can by no means please him. Let vs then see a little, whether this vowing and giuing of sayth and troth in mariage, without the parents agreeing ther-vnto, be to be holden lawfull, yea, or no, the which shall easely appeare vnto vs thus: what soeuer cannot bee performed, without the breache of God his commaundement, that same is vtterlye vnlawfull to be done, but to vow faith and troth in mariage, without the consent of parents, can not bee performed without the breach of God his commaundement, therefore for children to giue their sayth and troth in mariage, without the consent of theyr parentes, is vtterly vnlawfull. As concerning vowes God teacheth vs in the 30. of Numbers, that being made by the children, and not ratified by the parents, they are vnlawfull, and if vnlawfull not to be performed. And that it is against God his commaundement, for children to handfast themselves in wedlocke, their parents consent not going therewithall, hath at large bene discoursed, being the only matter of this Treatize, wherof
onsueth,

ensueth, that these promises being vnlawful, they do not at all binde the conscience of the makers of them to performe the same, nay rather the perfourming of them, is a matter not of conscience, but flat against conscience, if to do the thing that is vnlawfull, and vnlawfull by the word of God, be a matter against conscience, the which none, vnles the face be made of seasoned wainscot, will easely deny. Let not those therefore the which plead conscience for theyr excuse in this bad matter, any longer deceiue themselues with this broken reede, the which, if one leane vpon, it will straight wayes breake vnto shiuers, but rather whosoever haue in this sort vowed, or promised rashly, let them vnderstand, that their vowe and promise, may a greate deale more safely be broken, then performed, except the good will of the parents may bee obtayned, and yet in this case also, their former rashnes is earnestly and with vnfeined and hearty sorrow to be repented, that God through his mercy in Christ doe not impute it and lay it vnto their charge. And this aduise I would haue to be vnderstoode either of contractes, or of mariage also by such intising meanes, though the parents good will may be afterwads procured. But if after such priuy and stolen contractes and mariages, the good liking of the parentes cannot be won, what punishment ought to be inflicted and laid vpon the offenders, as well in regard of
their

An vnlawful
vowe or pro-
mise may law-
fully bee bro-
ken.

their owne default in breach of duty vnto their parentes, as also that others by their smart may bee terrified and feared from running into the like, it is not for mee being no lawe-maker to determine: I leaue that vnto the wise discretion of the godly magistrate, who I hope heereafter wil cary a more heauy hande towards this heinous and notorious crime, and see some discipline also to bee ordained for all such disobedient and vn-ruly children, the which by their rashe and headstrong attentes, haue forstalled the right of their godly parents, howsoeuer afterwards they can get their good will.

The conclusi-
on.

And thus, sith the law of nature, the lawe of God, the authority of the Scriptures, the examples of the godlye recorded in the same, the practise of the better sort, among the very Heathen, the testimonyes of the Poettes in their Comedies, and Tragedies, the Fathers, Councels, Decrees, Canons, and ciuill constitutions of the purer sort, yea some of the very Popes themselues, and lastly the firme consent of the best Diuines of these our dayes, maintaine and vpholde the parentes right in prouiding of honest matches in due time for their children, and prooue their contractes made without their parents consent, to bee of no validity or force, neither before God or man: I may lawfullye conclude, that it is the fathers charge to make a godlye choise, for his sonnes and daugh-

daughters in the way of marriage, without whose consent they are at no hand to knit vp the same, vnlesse the godlie magistrate in cases of extremitie by his authoritie doe take such order, so that hereafter my good hope is (the duties on both sides being now so plainelie set downe, that no ignorance in this behalfe may any longer hencefoorth be pretended) that as parents respecting God his glorie, wil diligentlie and carefullie practise the one, so their children in all humble obedience will performe the other, which God grant at the length for Christ his sake.

Amen.

F I N I S.



An afterwritte to the gentle Reader.



Y purpose was (right gentle Reader) in this short discourse before going, by strong and sounde proues to make this point of doctrine appeare most clearly, the which of the moste hath neuer bin so much as once thought vpon, and whereof a greate number, very sensible men otherwise, haue hitherto bin of this perswasion, that the word of God, speaketh not at all, namely of this duty of the parentes in making choise for theyr childrens mariage, or of the obedience, the which the sonnes and daughters in this respect do owe, vnto the godly choise of their fathers and mothers in this so holy an action.

How I haue performed the same, I leaue vnto the iudgement of the indifferent Reader, vpon the considerations of the reasons and authorities by me alleaged, in the which my chiefe end and drift was, to satisfie the godly and wel disposed Christians, the which will make some care of conscience to performe that hereafter, the which hitherto of ignorance and want of instruction, they haue
negle-

neglected and omitted . For when as parents shall hencefoorth plainelie see, that God himselfe layeth vpon them this necessarie Parentes. dutie of bestowing their children honestlie and godlie in wedlocke : and the children euidentlie nowe perceiue that they ought to stand vnto the godlie choise of their parentes, those in whose heartes the feare of God is not vtterlie quenched , will henceforward indeuour themselves to yeld obedience vnto their superiours in this most necessarie and waightie dutie , with all willingness being contented to bee ruled , and not to seeke rule, nor to intrude and thrust themselves into the right and libertie of their parentes, vpon whom the Lord in his wisdom hath laide his charge, so that without their priuitie and consent, they will not intangle themselves in mariage, nor seeke vnto themselves matches, such as may bee griefes and eie-sores vnto their louing Parentes, vnto whome in the Lorde they worthelie owe all obedience and dutifull subiection. I speake here of the godlie and better sort both of parentes and also children, who beeing of the people and Church of God, will be ordered and ruled by the lawes and ordinances, the which hee himselfe hath set downe for the direction and gouernment of the same in all other their waies and actions. As for the wicked and vngodlie, which rebelliously thinke in their hearts and sometimes blasphemously

Psal. 124.

Luk. 20. 34.

Εὐχαιρισ-

νομαι
figureth to
place or be-
flow in mari-
age, as the pa-
rents do, when
as they giue
their children
to be married

blasphemouslie vtter with their mouthes: Let
Us breake his bandes and cast his cordes from vs,
that is, will not suffer God to raign ouer them
after such manner as he hath appointed in his
word, I make small account or reckoning of
their either liking or disliking of this my sim-
ple labour, but refer them ouer vnto him
that dwelleth in heauen, & laugheth at them
and shall haue them in derision. But vnto all
you that either be in trueth Christians, or o-
therwise would so be taken and accounted,
know you that this custome of the parentes
placing and bestowing their children in ma-
riage, is as hath bene shewed, most ancient,
and commédable, yea and approoued by our
Lord and Sauour Christ himselfe also in the
xx of Luke. where, going about to confute
the errour of the Saduces, the which, if there
were a resurrection (which they denie) did
suppose that there must be also mariage, he a-
uoucheth it to haue bene the ordinarie pra-
ctise of the men of those times to giue their
children to be married: saieing, *The children of
this world marry wiues, and are giuen or bestow-
ed in mariage,* for so doeth the verb Εὐχαιρισ-
νομαι, which in that place hee vseth, most
properlie in the iudgment of the learned sig-
nifie. And by the men of this world, as well
the wicked as the godly, least that other-
wise wee might thinke that mariage dooth
not appertaine vnto the children of God
if we should here take children of this world

as opposite and sette against the children of light, or of God, as I confesse it must some times bee taken, which in this place cannot be, leaste it might seeme to giue some countenance vnto the error before recited. So that hereby clearely appeareth, that in the dayes of Christ 1589. yeares sithens and more, this was an order generally obserued, for the parentes in mariage to place and bestowe their children, the which also Beza, and Feguernekinus, who hath profitably abridged Marlorat his common places, doth note vpon this place. Let not Christians therfore dislike of that, which Christ himselfe, after whom they are named, seemeth to commend. But let them rather, knowing what God looketh for at their handes, in due season provide wiues for their sonnes, and husbandes for their daughters, least by forslow- ing the time too long, they bee either pre- uented by their childrens to rash contracting themselues, or otherwise to their greater sorrowe, see them runne into more greater folly, as it often commeth to passe, when as the sonnes and daughters, think that their fa- thers and mothers haue no care of them in this behalfe, yea in this busines let them carrie so gentle an hand towarde their chil- dren, that they themselues feeling best their owne estate, when as they be come vnto years and discretion conuenient, may, if their child- ly modesty will suffer them deale with their

Beza saith
that this place
most strongly
proueth the
power & au-
thority of pa-
rentes in be-
stowing their
children in
mariage.

parentes concerning this matter in an humble and reuerend manner by themselves, or otherwise by the godly intercession of their friends, who at their motion may put their parentes in minde, in time conuenient to haue care of these cases, by meanes whereof, many inconueniences and disorders shal bee met with ill before hand, the which for want of this Christiā foresight on both sides, do too vsually fall out, to the dishonour of God, and offence of his Church. The end of all is, that both the parentes and the children, vnderstanding what God looketh for on both their partes in this busines, set aside all caueling and cunning gloses to shake of this dutie. For I will not trouble my selfe wyth aunswering these many and vaine objections on this behalfe, vsuall to bee alleaged on both sides, but refer them ouer vnto the thorow shifting of their seuerall consciences in these actions, according vnto that, the which by this treatise, they shall learne to appertaine vnto their seuerall duties, that they may in sincerity and truth effect the same, being desirous, as purposedly to offend none, so gladly in this point to satisfie al, the which if it be not already performed accordingly, so far as the question taken in hand, to proue requireth, I will endeouour, as I shall hereafter by any the godly be aduertised, and labour (God willing) more fully and largely (so far as in melieth) to set downe, to the full contentment

ment of all such as are not purposely
resolved and determined, in this cause to
cavill, thwartle, and dissemble, hoping that
the godly shall profite, to the performing
of a necessary dutie, yet of a great parte left
unperformed, and the wicked bee made
unexcuseles, when the accounts must be ren-
dered, before that iudge, which shal geue sen-
tence without regarde of the person of any
whatsoever, that shall colourably seeke to
withdraw his necke out of his lawful and du-
tiful obedience. Wherefore in this duty, or
any other, the which the warrant of God his
word may iustifie, howsoever the same in any
respect may seeme strange vnto vs, let it bee
our continuall and most earnest praier, to de-
sire God to subdue our corrupt and carnall
affections vnto his most holie will, and god-
lie pleasure, so far forth as we shall haue his
word the infallible lode-stone to direct and
guide vs vnto the same, for Christ his sake. A-
men.



L O N D O N.

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